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The Folk-Lore Society,

FOR COLLECTING AND PRINTING

RELICS OF POPULAR ANTIQUITIES, &c.

ESTABLISHED IN

THE YEAR MDCCCLXXVIII.

Alter et Idem.

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XXXV.

[1895.]

The Folk-Lore Society.

(1895.)

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THE DENHAM TRACTS.

THE DENHAM TRACTS.

A Collection of Folklore by Michael Aislabie Denham,

AND

REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL TRACTS AND PAMPHLETS PRINTED BY MR. DENHAM BETWEEN 1846 AND 1859.

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EDITED BY

DR. JAMES HARDY.

VOL. II.

J.F.-n-36

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PREFACE.

THE issue of this volume has been delayed owing to the illness of Dr. Hardy when it was only half through the press. I took it up at this stage, and have thus completed the task of getting together these collections of folk-lore which were made before folk-lore was anything more than a pastime for the curious, or at most an antiquarian pursuit with no definite object in view, and only a probability of any results of value being derived from its preservation and study. I confess my sympathy goes out to these old antiquaries who were content year after year to record small things for the sake of recording. Of course their method of record was not perfect, was not even good; but then it was a record, and without their work the modern student would be badly off. The world is too much in a hurry now to produce any more of this class of antiquaries. The dividing line between the collector and the student who seeks to use collections for scientific purposes is not always preserved, and in consequence works are produced which cannot always be commended. The functions of these two classes of folk-lorists are quite distinct and should be kept distinct. A plain unadulterated collection of material, the result of personal testimony and research, is a thing to pray for. A work which handles a collection such as this in a scientific spirit, such, for instance, as Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* or Mr. Hartland's *Perseus*, is a thing to discuss and enjoy and improve upon as our knowledge increases. But the

two cannot be welded. When it is attempted we get wrong classification to begin with, and hence wrong conclusions. Superstitions and beliefs are made to qualify the facts of modern life instead of being studied each item by itself to see what is the substantive of human life and history with which it is in true agreement.

The truth is that a superstition now attached to birth, marriage, or death, to the domestic actions of the modern family, to the outdoor actions of the modern agriculturist, or to any other side of modern life, has become so attached by circumstances which have affected its later observance, not its original form. And hence when persons unqualified by any anthropological scholarship attempt to deal with some of the items of folk-lore for a literary purpose they fall into errors which have caused enormous difficulties in the way of true research.

Mr. Denham was not guilty of anything like this. His collection is haphazard to a degree. He simply jotted down what he heard as he heard it, and he did not seek to classify it. This, to my mind, is a distinct gain. This book represents what folk-lore was when it first began to be collected, and it may be profitably compared with many later collections which from some fancied literary necessity are burdened with a classification which begins with the routine of modern life and generally winds up with "miscellaneous" beliefs.

Mr. Denham's work is like Aubrey's, and Aubrey's is the foundation of English folk-lore. It is a reflex of what folk-lore actually is, the detritus of a once more or less extensive and more or less systematized belief and ritual, found in patches here and there, perfect in perhaps no one place and not often identical in different places, existing as superstitious belief with some people, practised as a custom or a child's game with others, remembered as a saying or a proverb with others. There is no general law for the preservation of folk-lore; it may h

become attached to a place, an object, a season, a class of persons, a rule of life, and have been preserved by means of this attachment; but because every item of folk-lore is not attached to the same agent, wherever that particular item has been preserved, it is so important not to stereotype an accidental association into a permanent one. I am anxious that Mr. Denham's work should be known as the best evidence on this important point. If it had been written at the present day, even if it had been edited under other auspices than that of the Folk-lore Society, it is not too much to say that it would have assumed a different character to that in which it now appears To take an instance, it would no doubt have been deemed necessary to have classified the "left leg stocking" divination (p. 281) amongst superstitions relating to dress, whereas the true determinant of this practice is the "left" (as opposed to the "right") which belongs to an important class of ancient beliefs which have been discussed by Grimm and other authorities in their bearings upon Indo-European history. It is curious that the Romans believed in the luck of the left, thus standing in opposition to the more general belief in the luck of the right, and the luck of the left belongs to the Roman wall district of northern Britain, whereas the luck of the right and the unluck of the left is found further south, and in the distinctly Teutonic parts of Britain.

If, then, I claim that the want of order and classification in this book constitutes one of its chief elements of scientific value, it is apparent that the only way to study folk-lore is to treat of each recorded item separately. For this purpose there will be found very interesting features here which are not to be found elsewhere. The names for the different classes of spirits (on pp. 77-78) is very full, and needs some investigation philologically and mythologically, because, although there are names derived from obvious misconcep-

tions of the popular mind, there are others which seem to me to contain important indications of early God-names. Apparitions, ghosts, and spirits make up a large element in north English folk-lore, for which the geographical and climatic conditions are no doubt chiefly answerable. The attachment of certain families to the district on the basis of ancient clan customs leads to the preservation of family traditions of great interest, and the descent of the Drummelzier from a river god (p. 42) is noted from Sir Walter Scott. Family apparitions seem to have been taken over by the Society for Psychical Research, and the group found on pp. 183-188 may be referred to with some interest. Well-worship, river-worship, and fire-worship are distinctive features of the beliefs recorded of northern Britain, but in the last of these groups Mr. Denham has missed many important details which have been recorded by later enquirers. Stones and stone circles have also an important place in these collections, but animals are not so well represented as might have been supposed. Whether this is due to deficient record or whether it is a characteristic feature of northern belief might be made a matter for enquiry.

Mr. Denham was in no sense a literary man, and his peculiar practice of issuing these tracts sometimes without date or other means of identification makes it extremely difficult to ascertain whether all he published on folk-lore has been recovered. There is no complete collection, I believe, extant. The Society of Antiquaries of London has a great many of the originals, but the British Museum library is very deficient. Dr. Hardy, too, has a good collection. It often happened that a tract was issued as a simple leaflet, and that later on this would be included in another tract without any alteration of or allusion to the original publication. This has made it difficult to pick out and arrange the material, and in two instances (pp. 121-124, 132-135; 258-261, 262-5) the same material has been unfortunately printed

twice. I did not discover this until it was too late to cancel the pages, and no doubt if Dr. Hardy had been well enough to see the whole volume through the press this inadvertence would not have happened.

This volume does not contain a reprint of the *Proverbs and Popular Sayings* published by the Percy Society, but with this exception it is believed that all the scattered tracts on folk-lore are comprised in the two volumes now issued by the Society.

The Society is greatly indebted to Dr. Hardy for the work he has done. He prepared the whole volume for the press, and added from his own store of Denham Tracts some that the Society had not been able to obtain. But the trying weather of last winter stopped all his work, and left him unable to pursue what has been the pleasure and delight of a long and busy lifetime.

G. Laurence Gomme.

24, Dorset Square, N.W.
May, 1895.

THE DENHAM TRACTS.

VIII.

FOLKLORE, OR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, OF THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.

For the want of a recording pen, innumerable are the ancient and interesting local rhymes, customs, legends, and valuable portions of history which have been irremediably lost and gathered up by time into his wallet, as offerings to oblivion.

Midsummer Cushions.

This was a custom, used some seventy years ago at many places in the North of England; but it, like almost every other of the innocent and pleasing customs and amusements of our fore-elders, is fast vanishing away, if it has not altogether done so. The young lads and lasses of the town or village having procured a cushion or, in accordance with local phraseology, a *whishion*, and covered it with calico, or silk of showy and attractive colour, proceeded to bedeck it with every variety of flower which they could procure out of their parents' and more wealthy neighbours' gardens, displaying them in such a manner so as to give it a most beautiful appearance. All this done, they placed themselves, with their cushion of Flora's choicest gems, in the most public place they conveniently could,

soliciting of every passer-by a trifling present of pence, which, in numerous cases, was liberally and cheerfully bestowed. A set form of words was made use of (in rhyme, I believe) when soliciting those gifts, the precise version of which I have never been able to obtain.

This custom prevailed from Midsummer Day to Magdalene Day, which latter has long been corrupted to "Maudlin Day."

The Mell Day, or Harvest Home.

In the counties of Durham and York, the last day of reaping with each individual farmer, is honoured above all others. This day is known throughout the north by the appellation of "Mell Day." The reapers (or shearers as they are popularly called), on this auspicious day, are entertained with the melodious sounds of a fiddle. An hour or two before the last and lucky cut the village musician is sent for to proceed with all haste to the harvest field, where he is expected to play some of his merriest tunes; to the sounds of which, at intervals, the shearers, binders, and their kind-hearted master, join in social dance. When the last handful is bound up in the golden sheaf, and the sheaves are all placed upright in lots of ten or twelve each, locally called stooks, the farmer's head man, or some other elderly male person employed during harvest, proceeds with most stentorian voice to "Shout the Mell," which is celebrated in the following rhymes:

Blest be the day that Christ was born,
We've getten 't mell of Mr. ———'s corn;
Weel bound, and better shorn.
Hip! Hip! Hip! Huzza!! Huzza !!

The labourers on this day are plentifully regaled with as good ale or strong beer as can be procured in the neighbourhood; to which is often added, by way of stimulus, a pretty liberal

addition from the rum bottle. This seldom fails to send home some of the fair maids, as well as the ancient dames of the village, chirping merry. Some years ago the masters used to treat the reapers with a supper, called the Mell Supper; but this custom, with very few exceptions, is now totally laid aside, and in consideration of this deviation from ancient custom, their employers give them a shilling each in addition to the regular wages of that day. This shilling is called the Mell Shilling. When dancing had become general after the supper, these parties used to be attended by Mummers; that is, men and women disguised in each other's apparel, &c. &c. This is in the dialect of the district termed Guising, and the individuals themselves Guisers. In the years 1825 and 1826 I saw the reapers come home from the Mell Field in the evening, dressed in high crowned muslin caps, profusely ornamented with ribbons of various colours, and preceded by music.

Feasts of Dedication.

"Wakes, church ales, summerings, tides, rush-bearings, revels, gants,* hoppings, fairs, vigils, ale feasts, or Whitsun ales, are anniversary feasts, great numbers of which are still kept in the counties of Durham and Northumberland in all their primitive glory and rude yet hearty hospitality, in commemoration of the dedication of the parish church or parochial chapel to some patron saint. Hopping is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'hoppan' to dance or leap. Dances in the country villages of the north of England are termed hops at the present period of time. By an act of Convocation passed in the reign of Henry VIII., the Feast of the Dedication was ordered to be held on the first Sunday in October, and the celebration of the

* [Gant, a village fair or wake.—East (Halliwell). Not in Brockett.]

Saint's day to be laid aside. In Somersetshire these sports are termed plays. In the west of England rails and rowls.

In the county of Durham a series of local feasts begin the last Sunday in July, and proceed, I think, in the following order: Neasham, Hurworth, Aldbrough, Stapleton, Blackwell, Cockerton, Haughton-le-Skerne, Harrowgate, Burdon, Sadberge, Coatham, Brafferton, and Aycliffe. Duck-hunting, racing, drinking, banqueting, and all sorts of secular sports are the order of the day on the Sabbath, and a day or two afterwards.—Longstaffe's *Hist. Darlington.* p. 242.

Riding the Stang.

Once upon a time there resided in the village of G[ainfor]d, in com. Dunelm (the place of the writer's nativity), a man and his wife of the name of Lamb. Now, for the first time in his life (and they had been married some dozen years or more), the old gentleman had been guilty of some venial delinquency, which his good wife considered of so flagrant a nature that her passion could not exhaust itself simply by giving him a "reet good setting down" (*i.e.* a good scolding), but to work the old lady set herself and gave him a most severe beating, or, as we Northerners term it, a threshing, into the bargain. Some neighbours chancing to pass during the hubbub heard the whole scrimmage between the old man and his better half. Then Fame, with her thousand tongues, bruited the tale abroad, and not without adding that much which made the little into a mickle. A consultation was held at the smith's shop, and it was unanimously agreed, that the stang be ridden for Mrs. Lamb. Well, the appointed night arrived, when, in accordance with "aunciente custome," a person, as proxy for the real delinquent, mounted the stang (a ladder, by-the-bye, for the comfort and convenience of the rider) and called aloud the

following doggrell rhymes at the full extent of his voice, the whole length and breadth of the village :—

With a ran, tan, tan, on an old tin can,
And a hey tinkle, how tinkle, hey tinkle tang;
It isn't for your sake, nor my sake, that I ride 't stang,
But it is for the awde Yowe * that threshest poor Lamb.
Hip ! Hip ! Huzza ! ! Huzza ! ! !

She bang'd him, she bang'd him, she bang'd him, indeed;
She bang'd him reet weel afore he stood need ;
She nowther tuke stick, staan, staff, nor stower,
But she up with her neif and she knock'd him ower, and ower, and ower, and ower.
Hip ! Hip ! Huzza ! ! Huzza ! ! !

She next tuke up an awde three-footed stule,
And she called him a bizon, and an awde drunken fule;
And then hit him sae hard, and cut him sae deep,
That the blude ran down his legs and into his shoes,
Like the blude of a new stuck sheep.
Hip ! Hip ! Huzza ! ! Huzza ! ! !

Now if ivver I hears tell, that *she* again rebels,
Or that *he* complains of us ridin 't stang,
Then we'll all come again,
And we'll ride 't stang again,
With a ran tan, ran tan, tang,
And a hey tinkle, how tinkle, hey tinkle, tang.
Hip ! Hip ! Huzza ! ! Huzza ! ! Huzza ! ! !

[In the pit villages near Gateshead Fell there is another

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* Observe the pun upon the name of Lamb, to wit, "Yowe," *i.e.* a female sheep which has had young. From the above incident arose the saying, "Aye, the old Yowe is the better Tupe"; and, though it is now more than fifty years ago, it is still repeated when the occasion serves by the ancients of the village.

variety of "Ridin' the Stang," not "meant as a mark of disgrace, as it is in many others; on the contrary, it is rather a mark of honour." The morning after a young man is married, he is mounted upon a "board or pole, and carried to the public house upon the shoulders of two men, where he is expected to give the pit's crew a 'blaw out.' The last married man is always chosen mayor, and undergoes the same operation. Both these events produce 'gaudy days.'"

They myed me ride the stang as suin
As aw show'd fyace at wark agyen.
The upshot was a gaudy-day,
A grand blaw-out wi' Grundy's yell.'

Wilson's *Pitman's Pay*, p. 51.—J. H.]

[Gaudy Day—Cuckoo Mornin' &c.

"In the pit villages near Gateshead Fell, there are certain times of the year when the young men and lads refuse to work, and insist on a 'gaudy day;' for instance, the first morning they hear the cuckoo, and when the turnips and peas are at maturity. They call these periods, 'a cuckoo mornin',' 'a tormit [turnip] mornin',' and 'a pea mornin'.' At such times they frequently adjourn to a neighbouring publichouse, where they enjoy themselves during a great part of the day.

Charles Lamb, in his *Recollections of Christ's Hospital*, when adverting to the festivities of Christmas, says 'the richest of us would then club our stock to have a gaudy day.'"—Wilson's *Pitman's Pay*, pp. 46, 47, note.—J. H.]

Barring Out.

This was a practice once very common in schools of a superior class throughout the whole of England, but most general in the north. It was generally practised about the period of St.

Nicholas's Day (6th December), who, it may be proper to remark, was the chosen patron of schoolboys. On this day was formerly celebrated the semi-impious Roman Catholic farce of the Boy Bishop, one of whom, in the year 1229, was permitted to say vespers before King Edward I., at the Chapel of Heton, near Newcastle on-Tyne; and the king was so much pleased with his youthful chaplain and choral followers that he made them a considerable present. The Eton Montem is evidently a substitution for the (ir)religious ceremony of one partaking of a military character. Some seventy or eighty years ago, vestiges of these medieval, at least, if not primeval, customs were retained in several of the grammar schools of the whole of the north of England. Brand says that he heard the custom was retained in the Dean and Chapter's schools, in the city of Durham, and that the same practice prevailed in the Kepier School, of Houghton-le-Spring, in the county of Durham. It was also practised at the grammar schools of Bowes, in the county of York; and at those of Scotby, Wetheral, and Warwick, in Cumberland; and Kirkby Stephen, in Westmoreland. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791, vol. lxi., p. 1170, mentioning some local customs of Westmoreland and Cumberland, says:—

"In September or October, the master is locked out of the school by the scholars, who, previously to his admittance, give an account of the different holidays for the ensuing year, which he promises to observe, and signs his name to the orders, as they are called, with two bondsmen. The return of these signed orders is the signal of capitulation; the doors are immediately opened; beef, beer, and wine, deck the festive board, and the day is spent in mirth."

In the statutes of Witton School, near Northwich, in Cheshire, founded A.D. 1558, the observance of this practice by the scholars is specially directed. See *Carlisle*, "Description of

Endowed Grammar Schools," vol. i. p. 133. It prevailed also at Rothbury in Northumberland, *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 259. Hutchinson, in his *History of Cumberland*, vol. ii. p. 322, says this custom was used by the scholars of the free school of Bromfield or Brumfield, in that county, about the beginning of Lent, or in the more expressive phraseology of the county, at Fasten's Even.

An ancient schoolmaster repeated to the writer the following stanza of a Barring-out Rhyme, used at a school in com. Ebor nearly sixty years ago.

" Orders! Master! Orders!
Orders we do crave;
And if you wont grant us orders,
Orders we will have.
Although we are but little boys,
We are both stiff and stout;
And if you won't grant us orders,
We'll keep you longer out."

Although the above may form only one half or may be but one-third or fourth of the grand total of the poetical address issued on these privileged days—for I have cause to believe that the whole of the holidays claimed for the ensuing twelve months were strung up together in equally uncouth verses—I still have thought it worth " Chronicling in a Boke," hoping that either myself, or some kind and charitable reader, may be able to add the remanet at a later period of time.

The Wassail or Loving Cup.

A relic of this primitive and good old Christmas custom is still retained to a much greater extent than hitherto I was aware of, in the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland; and here, too, the equally good old-fashioned practice of little

family parties at this period of the year is also continued. The Wassail or Loving Cup, is introduced long ere the visitors separate, the contents of which are composed of a liberal quantum of good old Jamaica rum, hot water, sugar, and lemon prepared in a large china basin, or small punch bowl. This is first partaken of by the master and dame, drinking to the health of each individual of the assembled party; it is then handed round to each, who, also, taking the bowl in both hands, drinks to the health and happiness of the whole assembly. By the time the loving cup has passed through the hands of all present, the mirth-inspiring beverage has roused the spirits of one and all to trip it in the mazy dance.

Fig-Sue. Good Friday.

The customary dish of Fig Sue is still prepared, and alone partaken of for dinner on this day, by many families throughout the whole of the North of England. The dish is a composition of figs, ale, white bread, sugar, and nutmeg. I never tasted the mess, but those who have, tell me that it is most excellent.

Fairings.

The children in many districts in the North of England thus address any male person, whom they see returning from fair or market:—

> "Cowper, Cowper, a nag or a knowt,
> If you please will ye give me a fairing?"

Charm for the Toothache.

The following really curious traditional rhyme I took down from the narration of a gentleman still living, and caused the same to be given in the *Literary Gazette*, and Mr. Halliwell's

really valuable and interesting little book, *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales of England.* London, 1849.

Peter was sitting on a marble stone,
And Jesus passed by;
Peter said, "My Lord! My God!
How my tooth doth ache!"
Jesus said, "Peter art whole!
And whoever keeps these words for my sake,
Shall never have the toothache!"—Amen.

Mr. Halliwell records in his book the following various version of the above rhymes, as used in one of the Yorkshire dales; and in conclusion, says that he has "been informed on credible authority, that the trade of selling efficacies of this kind is far from obsolete in the remote rural districts":

"As Sant Petter sat at the Geats of Jerusalem our Blessed Lord and Sevour Jesus Crist pased by and sead, What Eleth thee hee sead Lord My Teeth Ecketh he sead arise and folow Mee and thy Teeth shall Never Eake Eney More. fiat ✕ fiat ✕ fiat ✕." [The Virgin Mary is the sufferer in a similar charm for toothache in the *Physicians of Myddvai*, p. 453.] Another charm is given in Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 141.

A Saturday's Moon.

A Saturday's change, and a Sunday's prime,
Was nivver a good mune in nea man's time.

Dr. Forster, of Bruges, well known as a meteorologist, declares that by the journal kept by his grandfather, father, self, ever since 1767, to the present time, whenever the new moon has fallen on a Saturday, the following twenty days have been wet and windy, in nineteen cases out of twenty.

Charm Prayers.

The following charm prayer is used at this day in Westmoreland and is taught by mothers as well as nurses to young children, and is repeated by them on retiring to rest:

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
God bless this bed that I lie on;
If anything appear to me,
Sweet Christ arise and comfort me.
Four corners to this bed,
Four angels round my head,*
One to pray, one to wake,
Two to guard me till day-break.
And blessed guardian-angels keep
Me safe from dangers while I sleep.
I lay me down upon my side.
I pray the Lord to be my guide;
And if I die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen.

The following prayer is, I understand, used in the county of Norfolk:

I lay me down to rest me,
I pray to God to bless me;
And if I sleep and never wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,
This night for evermore. Amen.

Two articles on ancient Paternosters have already appeared in the *Folk-Lore Record*, vols. i and ii, the first by W. J. Thoms, Esq., the second by Miss Evelyn Carrington; of these

---

* *Varia.*—Six angels round me spread,
Two to sing, and two to pray,
And two to carry my soul away.

Mr. Denham's examples present other varieties. In Sinclair's *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, ed. 1815, there are some out-of-the-way Scotch specimens, which may be placed alongside of these last. Agnes Simpson, condemned for witchcraft in the time of James VI. of Scotland, was a sort of white witch. She taught ignorant people, two prayers, "The Black and White Pater Noster in Metre, in set forms, to be used morning and evening, and at other times when occasion offereth."

WHITE PATER NOSTER.

"God was my foster,
He fostered me
Under the book of palm tree
Saint Michael was my dame.
He was born at Bethlehem,
He was made of flesh and blood.
God send me my right food;
My right food, and dyne too,
That I may to yon kirk go,
To read upon yon sweet book,
Which the mighty God of heaven shook.
Open, open, heaven's yaits;
Steik, steik, hell's yaits.
All saints be the better,
That hear the White Prayer, Pater Noster."

THE BLACK PATER NOSTER RUNS THUS:

"Four neuks in this house for haly angels,
A post in the midst, that's Christ Jesus,
Lucas, Marcus, Matthew, Joannes,
God be into this house, and all that belang us." *

* pp. 19, 20.

"At night, in the time of Popery, when folks went to bed they believed the repetition of the following prayer was effectual to preserve them from danger, and the house too.

" Who sains the house the night ?
They that sains it ilka night.
Saint Bryde and her brat,
Saint Colme and his hat,
Saint Michael and his spear,
Keep this house from the weir ;
From running thief ;
And burning thief ;
And from a' ill Rea,
That be the gate can gae ;
And from an ill wight,
That be the gate can light.
Nine reeds about the house ;
Keep it all the night.
What is that what I see,
So red, so bright, beyond the sea ?
'Tis he was pierced through the hands,
Through the feet, through the throat,
Through the tongue ;
Through the liver, through the lung.
Well is them that well may
Fast on Good-Friday."*

"A country man in East Lothian used this grace always before and after meat.

Lord be blessed for all his gifts,
Defy the devil and all his shifts ;
God send me mair siller.—Amen." †

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* p. 148. † p. 149.

RHYMES ON MOUNTAINS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND WHICH INDICATE THE WEATHER.

1. When Roseberry Topping wears a cap,
Let Cleaveland then beware of a rap.

2. When Roseberrye Toppinge wears a cappe,
Let Cleveland then beware a clappe.—Camden.

3. When Eston-Knab puts on a cloake,
And Roseberrye a cappe,
Then all the folks on Cleaveland's clay,
Ken there will be a clappe.

4. When Roseberry Topping wears a hat,
Morden Carrs will suffer for that.

Roseberry Topping is the name of a lofty conical-shaped hill in the North Riding of the county of York. The rap and clappe alluded to in the rhymes is, in plain language, a thunder storm. Camden observes, that when the top of this hill "begins to be darkened with clouds, rain generally follows"; hence the ancient distich. Morden Carrs is in the county of Durham, near Sedgfield.

If Riving-pike do wear a hood,
Be sure that day will ne'er be good.—Lancashire.

When Gelt puts on his night-cap 'tis sure to rain.
—Cumberland.

When Skiddaw hath a cap,
Scruffell wots full well of that.
—Cumberland, and Annandale in Scotland.

When Hood-hill has on his cap,
Hamilton's sure to come down with a clap.—Yorkshire.

When Knipe-scar gets a hood,
Sackworth may expect a flood.—Westmoreland.

Guy Fawkes; or, Fifth of November Rhymes.

A doggrel hominy roared (not sung) at the full extent of the voices of two or three dozen lads at Kirkby Stephen in Westmoreland, on the eve of the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot, when making progresses in order to collect money for the purchase of gunpowder and tar-barrels. I took it down from the oral recitation of a lad who had, on many occasions, acted his part therein, like a true stentor:

Hollo boys, hollo boys,
  Let the bells ring!
Hollo boys, hollo boys,
  God save the King!
Pray to remember
The fifth of November,
  Gunpowder, treason, and plot,
When the King and his train,
Had nearly been slain,
  Therefore it shall not be forgot.

Guy Fawkes, Guy Fawkes,
And his companions,
Strove to blow all England up;
But God's mercy did prevent,
And saved our King and his parliament.
Happy was the man,
  And happy was the day,
That God caught Guy,
  Going to his play,
With a dark lanthorn,
And a brimstone match,
Ready for the prime to touch.

As I was going through the dark entry,
I spied the devil,
Stand back! Stand back!
Queen Mary's daughter,
Put your hand in your pocket,
And give us some money
To kindle our bon-fire!
Huzza! Huzza! Huzza!

I can give no explanation of this, further than that I take it to be intended as a compliment to the mistress of the mansion: "Queen Mary's daughter"—I cannot tell what it means! I put the question as to its meaning to the reciter when I committed it to paper, but he could throw no light on it. His answer was, "Aw larnt it sae, and aw knaw na mair."

Singular Will.

The following singular will was proved at York in the year of our Lord 1771:—

This is my last will,
I insist on it still,
So sneer on and welcome,
And e'en laugh your fill:
I, William Hickington,
Poet of Pocklington,
Do give and bequeath,
As free as I breathe,
To thee, Mary Jarem,
The queen of my harem,
My cash and my cattle,
With every chattel,
To have and to hold,
Come heat or come cold,
Sans hindrance or strife,
Tho' thou'rt not my wife.

As witness my hand
Just here as I stand,
This twelfth day of July,
In the year seventy.
WILLIAM HICKINGTON.

SCHOOLBOY RHYMES.

A rhyme for the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity:

Stir up, we beseech thee,
The puddings in the pot;
And when we get home,
We'll eat them all hot.

The following, as also the still more popular saying "All my eye and Betty Martin," had its origin during the period in which the Church of Rome was in its "downward progress" in the British Isles. It formed one of the many Protestant flings at Popery, and though not the most dignified, was perhaps not the least effectual among the many instruments of the Reformation. It, too, like Betty Martin, is a parody on what the members of the Romish Church held sacred:—

Hail Mary! full of grace,
Popu-larry, curtail face;
Egg shells, goose quills,
Knobsticks, sparrow bills.

SHROVE-TIDE RHYME.

Shrove Sunday,
Collop Monday, Pancake Tuesday,
Ash Wednesday, Bloody Thursday,
Friday's lang, but will be dune,
Then hey for Setterday efternune.

Good Friday Rhyme.

One a penny buns, two a penny buns,
One a penny, two a penny, hot X buns,
Butter them and sugar them, and put them in your muns.

Rhymes on Bathing.

He who bathes in May,
Will soon be laid in clay;
He who bathes in June,
Will sing a merry tune;
He who bathes in July,
Will dance like a fly.

Book Rhymes.

In the library of the Dean and Chapter of Durham is an ancient *Missale Romanorum*, once the property of the church of Hutton Rudby, Yorkshire, as we learn from the following quaint rhymes contained in the bowke itself:—

Whoso owne me dothe loke,
I am ye Chourche of Rudby's bowke;
Whoso dothe saye ye contrary,
I reporte me to awll ye parysshyngby.

This book was given by Samuel Davidson, Esq., to the Rev. George Davenport, Rector of Houghton-le-Spring, and was by him, in 1662, given to the library left by Bishop Cosin to the clergy of the Diocese of Durham.

Rhyme on Bulmer Stone, Darlington.

In Darnton towne ther is a stane,
And most strange is yt to tell,
That yt turnes nine times round aboute
When yt hears ye clock strike twell.

This truly wonderful revolving stone, though by-the-by it is

not singular in this property, stands in the front of some low cottages constituting Northgate House, in the street bearing the same name (See Longstaffe's *Hist. Darlington*, p. 164). It is a water-worn boulder-stone of Shap (Westmorland) granite.

Shrove Tuesday Rhymes.

When the pancake bell begins to knell,
The frying-pan begins to smell.

Pancakes were anciently an universal dish on this festival; I myself have often partaken of them. Shrove Tuesday in the North of England is generally called Pancake Tuesday. A dish of fritters is usual in France on this day and the following Thursday. See Hone's *Year Book*, 146, 7, 8, 9. In Lancashire hot pancakes are to this day introduced at the tea table on Shrove Tuesday.

"Fit as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday," is a very old popular saying.

The Calgarth Skull.

There is an extraordinary skull preserved with great care at Calgarth Park, near Applethwaite in Westmoreland, of which tradition says, that if brayed to powder at night it is regularly found in its perfect state placed on the hall table next morning. I understand there is a very curious legend in connection with this skull, which I have in vain endeavoured to obtain.

Magpie Rhymes.

According to the number of magpies you see at one and the same time when going on a journey, &c. &c. you may calculate your good or ill luck, as follows:—

One for sorrow,
Two for luck (*varia* mirth);

Three for a wedding,
Four for death (*varia* a birth) ;
Five for silver (*varia* rich) ;
Six for gold (*varia* poor) ;
Seven for a secret
Not to be told ;
Eight for heaven,
Nine for h——,
And ten for the deevil's awn sell !

Sir Humphrey Davy in his *Salmonida* has a note on those verses. The following are a few of the local names for this Devil's bird : nanpie, chatter-pie, maggy ; in Kent it is called a haggister ; in Lancashire, a pyanot ; Cotgrave in his Dictionary gives "magatapie." In Northumberland it is called pyanot, and I have somewhere seen it spelt maggot-pie. At the sight of one magpie, the good folks in Westmoreland make use of the following charm to avert the ill omen :

Magpie, magpie, chatter and flee,
Turn up thy tail and good luck fall me.

But I have been credibly told that the act of making the sign of the cross on the ground is a much more effectual charm !

A North Countrie Farmer's Soliloquy on the Prospects of his Hay Harvest.

Wilt thou be hay ?
Nay !
Wilt thou be fother (fodder) ?
I'll be nowther !
Wilt thou be muck ?
That's my luck !

Animal Sacrifice at Christian Burials (?).

In the month of August, 1849, in excavating the earth within

Staindrop Collegiate Church in order to build the flues for warming the sacred edifice, the skeleton of a human body was exhumed, which was generally supposed to be one of the Lordly Nevilles of Raby Castle in the Bishopric, at whose feet were found the bones of a dog of the greyhound breed. It would be worth the trouble of inquiry could we ascertain the fact whether this primitive custom of slaying and interring a favourite animal with the body of its owner was occasionally retained in the Christian Church down to the period of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. We read of one of "The Noble Nevilles," whose war-horse, armed in battle array, preceded the body of its master at his interment in Durham Priory Church. The horse, however, in this case was not slain, but given to the said church as a portion of its owner's mortuary payment.—See *Journal of Archæological Institute*, vol. vi. p. 436.

Weather Proverbs.

Easterly winds and rain,
Bring cockles here from Spain.

As the season in which cockles are in the greatest supply is generally the most stormy in the year, the sailors' wives at the seaport towns in Durham and Northumberland consider the cry of the cockle-man as the harbinger of bad weather; and the sailor,

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The following pages (21-80) are from another tract entitled "Folklore; or Manners, Customs, Weather Proverbs, Popular Charms, Juvenile Rhymes, Ballads, &c. &c. in the north of England."

when he hears the cry of "cockles alive" on a dark, wintry night, concludes that a storm is at hand, and breathes a prayer backwards for the soul of bad-weather Geordy!

[Chatto's *Rambles in Northumberland and on the Scottish Border*, p. 207.]

Rain Rhymes.

There are several infantile rhymes used as charms for or against rain, viz. :—

1. Rain, rain, go away,
   Come again another day.

2. Rain, rain, gang to Spain,
   And never come here again.

3. Rain, rain, pour down,
   And come na' mair to our towne.

4. Rain, rain, gang away,
   And come again on Midsummer day.

5. Rain, rain, go away,
   Come again to-morrow day;
   When I brew and when I bake,
   I'll give you a little cake.

6. Rain, rain, go to Spain,
   Fair weather come again.

7. Rain, rain, go away,
   And come again on Saturday.

8. Rain, rain, faster,
   Bull's in the pasture,
   Cow's in the meadow (*varia* clover),
   Sheep's in the corn.

Rhymes on the Winds, &c.

When 't wind's in 't east,
Cauld and snaw comes 't neist ;
When 't wind's in 't west,
It suits 't farmer best ;
When 't wind's in 't north,
We ha' to sup het scalding broth ;
When 't wind's in 't south,
It's muck up to 't mouth,

A dry August and warm
Doth the harvest no harm ;
But a rainy August,
Makes a hard-bread crust.

At St. Barthol'mew,
Then comes cold dew. (24 August.)

Vulgar Errors.

1. It is an article in the vulgar creed that if a female appears abroad, and receives either insults or blows from any of her neighbours, previous to the ceremony of churching, after giving birth to a child, she has no remedy at law. Neither must a mother enter the house of either friend, relative, or neighbour, till she has been churched. If she is so uncanny, it betokens ill luck to the parties so visited.

2. The popular belief of the earth no more growing grass where a foul and bloody murder has been committed is very common, and singularly supported by the Field of the Forty Footsteps, near London, where two brothers fought a duel, and took each other's life, about a love affair. See Southey's *Common Place Book*, second series, p. 21 ; Miss Porter's novel,

Forty Footsteps. There is also a dramatic piece which bears this name. This spot of ground was built upon about the year 1800. The exact spot whereon tradition says "poor old Willy Robinson" was murdered on Holwick Fell, in Teesdale, 1794, is positively asserted by a living eye witness to have remained a barren waste ever since.

3. If the finger or toe nails of an infant are cut previous to its attaining the age of twelve months, it will prove a thief in mature age. Mothers and nurses beware; and mind you continue the good old fashioned custom of "nibbling."

4. I once saw an aged matron turn her apron to the new moon to ensure good luck for the ensuing month.

5. There is a tradition that Judas Iscariot had a head of black hair and a red beard; this belief may have given rise to the proverb, "He is false by nature that hath a black head and a red beard."

6. Never allow any one to take a light out of your house on New Year's Day; a death in the household before the expiration of the year is sure to occur if it be allowed. Never throw any ashes, dirty water, or anything, however worthless, out of your house on this day; to do so betokens ill luck; but you may bring in as much honestly gotten goods as your means allow, and a blessing will attend their spending. If a female is your first visitant, and be permitted to enter your house on the morning of New Year's Day, it portendeth ill luck for the whole year.

7. The forefinger of the right hand is considered by the common people as venomous, and consequently is never used in applying anything to a wound or sore.

8. If a child tooths first in its upper jaw it is considered ominous of its dying in its infancy.

9. Good Friday and Easter Sunday are both considered as lucky days on which to cast the caps of young children.

Puddening Infants.

The ancient offering of an egg, a handful of salt, and a bunch of matches, to a young child on its first visit to the house of a neighbour is still very prevalent in many parts of the North of England at the present period. In the neighbourhood of Leeds the ceremony is called "puddening," and the child is said to be "puddened." There is no doubt but that these three offerings are typical of the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, and of the lake that burneth, &c.—See Brockett's *Glossary of North Country Words*, vol. i. p. 90, art. "Child's First Visit."

Christmas Observances.

To send a "Vessle-cup Singer" away from your doors unrequited (at least the first that comes) is to forfeit the good luck of all the approaching year. Every family that can possibly afford it at least have a Yule cheese and Yule cake provided against Christmas eve, and it is considered very unlucky to cut either of them before that festival of all festivals. A tall mould candle, called a Yule candle, is lighted in the evening and set upon the table, these candles are presented by the chandlers and grocers to their customers. The Yule Log is either bought of the carpenter's apprentice or found in some neighbour's field. It would be unlucky to light either the log or candle till the proper period; so also it is considered unlucky to stir the fire or move the candlestick during the supper, neither must the candle be snuffed, nor any one stir from the table till supper is ended. In these suppers it is considered unlucky to have an odd number at table, especially so if thirteen. This latter piece of superstí-

tion is evidently taken from the last supper partaken of by our blessed Saviour and his twelve apostles. A fragment of the log is occasionally saved and put under a bed to remain till next Christmas, it secures the house from fire, and a small piece of it thrown into a fire (occurring at the house of a neighbour) will quell the raging element. A piece of the candle should be kept to ensure good luck. No person, except boys, must presume to go out of doors till the threshold has been consecrated by the footsteps of a male. The entrance of a woman on the morning of this day, as well as on that of the New Year, is considered as the height of ill-luck. St. Stephen's day in the north is devoted pretty generally to hunting and shooting, the game laws being considered as not in force on that day.

All Souls' Day.

A few thrifty, elderly housewives still practice the old custom of keeping a soul mass-cake (2nd November) for good luck. The Rev. George Young, in his *History of Whitby* (Yorkshire), says: "A lady in Whitby has a soul mass-loaf nearly a hundred years old."

Montferrand, near Beverley.

The fairest lady in this land,
Was drown'd at Mont Ferrand.

This dark saying of antiquity was quoted by one of the members of the Archæological Institute, at their meeting holden at York, in July, 1846. At Montferant, or Montferand, are the foundations of an ancient castle. Of the origin of the rhyme I am totally ignorant; mayhap some "honest Yorkshire"

fellow traveller in the same mazy paths of antiquity can throw some light upon it.

A Nursery Song.

The following beautiful little nursery song, which I took down from the recitation of a female relative, now no more, is unquestionably the gem of baby literature. It was communicated by me to J. O. Halliwell, Esq., F.R.S., and by him given in the fourth edition of the *Nursery Rhymes of England*, and again in his *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales*, 1849, p. 163, in both cases without acknowledgment:—

The Babes in the Wood.

My dear do you know,
How a long time ago,
  Two poor little children
Whose names I don't know,
Were stolen away,
On a fine summer's day,
  And left in a wood,
As I've heard people say.

And when it was night,
So sad was their plight;
  The sun it went down,
And the moon gave no light!
And they sobbed and they sigh'd
And they bitterly cried;
  And, poor little things,
They laid down and died!

And when they were dead,
The robin so red
  Brought strawberry leaves,
And over them spread;

And all the day long
He sang them this song—
Poor babes in the wood,
Poor babes in the wood !
And don't you remember
The babes in the wood ?

The superstitious belief that the Robin performs the office of covering the dead bodies of the human species with leaves, &c., is noticed by Shakespeare, Drayton, and Webster. In the ballad of *The Soldier's Repentance*, the robin is invoked by the dying soldier to bury him when dead. Again, in the *West Country Damosel's Complaint*, "mourning birds with leafy boughs" are said to have given a burial to her and her youthful lover.

Certaine Dyshes for certaine Tymes.

A turkey and mince-pie at Christmas; a gammon of bacon on Easter Day; a goose on Michaelmas Day; oysters on St. James's Day; a roast pig on St. Bartlemy's Day; a fat hen at Shrovetide; ham or bacon collops on Shrove Monday; pancakes on Shrove Tuesday; a male pullet and bacon on Fasten's Day; hot-cross buns on Good Friday; bull beef at Candlemas; pullets are in season during the whole of January, hence the proverb:—

If you but knew how good it were
To eat a pullet in Janivere,
If you had but twenty in your flock,
You'd leave but one to go with the cock.

Eggs on the Saturday before Shrove Sunday; a soul cake on All Souls' Day; salmon and all kinds of fish in Lent, &c. &c.

The Giant Cor.

In the museum at Keswick is preserved an immensely large bone, said to be a rib of the Northumbrian giant Cor. A bone of Giant Wade's cow is, or was, shown at Mulgrave Castle, Yorks. [The brother giants Cor, Ben, and Con are celebrated in Dr. John Carr's *Ode to the Derwent.* Richardson's *Table Book, &c.*, Leg. Div. i., p. 285. They resided at Corbridge in Northumberland, and Conset and Benfieldside in Durham.]

Markets.

Brough in Westmorland, and Reeth in the North Riding of Yorkshire are two instances of towns enjoying the privilege of a market, but not having a church therein. St. David's, in Wales, is a city without a market.

Vulgar Errors.

1. A long black hair from the mane or tail of a horse thrown into a running stream instantly becomes a living eel. When a school boy I perfectly recollect trying this experiment in the river Greata.

2. If a fruit tree is topped with a saw it will die, and not spring afresh as intended.

3. It was quite common when I was a lad, some forty years ago, to hear one's neighbour observe during a hurricane of wind, "There's been somebody at 't wise man this morning, and he's raised t' wind," and the saying is, even still, occasionally heard.

4. I also recollect, on occasion of the death of a certain very wicked female neighbour of mine, now many years ago, one truly dreadful night of wind and rain, thunder and lightning, hearing that this awful tempest was caused by a visit of the devil to bear away the soul of ——— to the infernal

regions. And this portion of the popular creed is very widely diffused throughout the length and breadth of the north of England. Numerous are the chronicled instances which might be quoted in support of this ancient national dogma. The saying, "As busy as the devil in a gale of wind" is still used in the North.

5. The common people, universally almost, connect subterraneous passages with buildings of antiquity, especially if they are in a ruinous state. Communications of this sort are said to exist between the highly interesting but desecrated chapel of Old Richmond (on the Yorkshire banks, opposite Gainford), and Cliffe Hall, some three miles further down the Tees; also from St. Nicholas's to Easby Abbey, both in the vicinage of Richmond; so likewise between Penrith Castle and Dockwray Hall, a distance of 307 yards; also from Guisborough Priory to a parcel of land called the Tocketts. A secret passage was also connected with Anderson Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In connection with Guisborough passage a curious legend is told. Many other places might also be enumerated.

6. The not yet exploded belief in Fairies connects itself with Fairy Slippers, Fairy Stones, Fairy Butter, Fairy Pipes (on which, by-the-bye, a curious article might be written), Fairy Cups, Fairy Cauldrons, Fairy Wells, Fairy Hills, Fairy Rings, Fairy Money, Elf Locks, Elf Shots, Fairy Cakes, Fairy Javelins, Fairy Kettles, Fairy Loaves, Fairy Mushrooms, Elf Arrows, Puck Fists, Fairy Flax, Fairy Bells (*i.e.* the flower of the Foxglove), Fairy Fingers, Fairy or Colpixy Heads, Elf Fire, Elf Knots, Fairy Saddles, etc., etc. [See pp. 110–111.]

7. A bunch of ash keys carried in the hand preserves the bearer from witchcraft; as also does the twig of the rowan or roan-tree.

8. It is commonly believed that if a female has a boy and girl at one birth she will never become pregnant again.

Pancakes.

At Sheffield, pancakes are said to be thrown from the leads of the churches on Shrove Tuesday; and it is there held as a sort of minor All Fools' Day; for many are the children whom more foolish adults are guilty of sending on the bootless errand of catching them in their descent, the moment the church clock strikes twelve.

In some farm houses it is still customary for the servants, male as well as female, according to seniority, to fry, and toss their pancakes; but if they did not get it ate before the next one was enough, they were dragged out of the house, put into a wheelbarrow and whemmeled over upon the muck-midden.

Lifting.

The ancient, but not very becoming, custom of lifting or stanging as it is called in Westmoreland, is still preserved in many of the towns and villages on New Year's Day. On this day the men lift the women upon a ladder or pole, and occasionally in a chair or swill, carried by two or more men, followed by a few dozens of youngsters, and hoist them away to the nearest public-house; where they are required, by the law of prescriptive right, to call for a quart of ale, at the expense of the female equestrian. If this payment, or promise thereof, is not complied with, one of the lady's feet is denuded of its shoe, which is left in pledge with the ale-wife. It is, as may be supposed, always redeemed.

Goodman.

"The goodman of the house." This term signifies head of the household, or chief of the clan. The word is still in popular use.

Candle-Bark.

This domestic utensil, now nearly out of use, yet still to be met with in the possession of old housekeepers, is a cylindrical box, formed originally of the bark of a certain tree, though now of wood, but more generally of tin. It was the case wherein candles were wont to be kept till wanted for use.

Herb-pudding.

In the north it is still customary in some districts to have a herb-pudding on day [a pudding of bitter herbs eaten in Passion Week]; in the composition of which the Passion or Patience Dock, otherwise Eastern Giants* and young nettles, hold the chief place.

The Quern Mill.

Of the primitive household mills, many hundreds if not thousands, are still in existence, and many in the keeping of those who ken nothing either of their history or use. Dr. Johnson notices them as being still used in the Highlands at the period of his visit.

Ball Playing.

This game commences on Pancake Tuesday, and continues without intermission till Easter.

[* Rumex Patientia; a native of Italy, introduced into English cultivation in 1573.—Aiton's *Hortus Kewensis*, ii., p. 318. Patience Dock is also given in Glossaries as a name of *Polygonum Bistorta* in the North.]

Old Shoe.

When a young person is leaving his family and friends or going to be married, it is still usual to throw an old shoe after him for luck. Many try to hit the party on the back.

Virgin Garlands.

This truly elegant custom has, I much fear, fallen into entire desuetude. May I, however, live to see its restoration. One of these votive garlands was solemnly borne before the coffin by two girls, who placed it on the coffin in the church during the reading of the church service for the burial of the dead. Thence it was conveyed in the same manner to the grave, and after the interment of the corpse was again taken to the church and carefully deposited on the skreen dividing the quire from the nave of the church, as an emblem of virgin purity, and of the frailty and uncertainty of human life.

In Corydon's *Doleful Knell,* we read:—

"A garland shall be framed
By art and nature's skill,
Of sundry coloured flowers,
In token of good will.*

New Year's Gifts.

At Kirkby Stephen, Westmoreland, it is the custom for

* Mr. Denham in his correspondence mentions having recently (22nd February, 1857) received a reduced facsimile of the virgin's funeral garland, from Westmoreland. "It is really beautiful. I have also an elegant specimen of a rush-bearer's garland from the same county. Also a curiously formed palm cross, in which the ornamental parts are in various coloured silks; but it falls far short of the other articles in beauty."

children to beg their New Year's Gifts on the eve of this day.

Query.—Is this peculiar to the above county?

Holy Wells.

At Bowes, North Riding of Yorkshire, is one of those ancient springs or fountains which our ancestors looked upon as sacred. This spring of beautiful water is popularly known as Saint Farmin's Well. Who Saint Farmin was I wot not, but there was Firmin, a bishop of Usez in Languedoc, and to him no doubt this spring was dedicated by the Norman clergy, who would be settled at Bowes as chaplains at the castle, shortly after the Conquest, in honour of their saintly countryman. At Kirkby Stephen is a wonderfully copious spring, on the brink of the Eden, known by the name of Ladywell, which has within these few late years been appropriated to private uses. This semi-sacrilegious act was committed by Francis Birkbeck of Kirkby Stephen, who diverted the current of its waters down to his brewery to convert into ale, and that, too, without the slightest opposition on the part of the inhabitants of that wonderfully improving little country town. The well has ever been looked upon as public property. Let justice be done.

Wooden Trenchers.

These primeval utensils were universally used in the servants' hall at ———— till a very recent period; and in fact were the usual platter for the tenants at the rent-day dinners, till about the year 1830, or later. They were not superseded by the fictile plate till after numerous objections had been raised by the more independent and higher class of tenantry during many previous years. Fruit puddings and roast beef (or rather perhaps contrariwise) sweetened rum sauce, and beef and

mutton gravies, were all eaten off the same trencher. They now (1851) eat off pottery, and have their plates changed like other Christian folks. Salt and mustard spoons are, however, still unknown. Note, in 1512, pewter plates and dishes were considered a luxury only to be indulged in by the higher order of nobles. Of pewter dishes a noble specimen still exists at Streatlam Castle, sufficiently large to contain the whole carcase of a sheep. In fact, it was used for that purpose on the occasion of the late Earl of Strathmore attaining his majority, and, as I have been told, has never been used since.

A Table of the Divisions of Land and Qualifications of Nobility.

Ten families make a tything,
Fourteen carucates were one tything,
Ten tythings make a hundred or wapentake,
Ten plough lands make a fee,
A twenty pound land makes a knight's fee,
Twenty acres make an ox-gang,
Thirty acres make one yard of land,
One hundred acres make one hide of land,
Five hides make one knight's fee,
Forty hides make a barony,
&c., &c.

Dykes.

The objects or use of these works is unknown. In Berwickshire there was said to have been a rampart and trench called Herrit's Dyke, running from east to west, now reduced to a fragment. To descend to modern days, the entrenchment which formerly surrounded the town of Newcastle-on-Tyne was called the King's Dyke.

GAME, NURSERY, ETC., RHYMES.

1. Draw buckets of water,
For my lady's daughter;
My father's a king,
And my mother's a queen,
And I've got a little sister
All dressed in green:
One by bush,
Two by bush.
Pray little sister, creep under my bush.

2. My left cheek, my right cheek [*varia* ear],
My left cheek burns:
If it be my enemy,
Turn cheek turn;
But if it be my true love,
Burn cheek burn.

NOTE.—Always begin the rhyme with the ear, or cheek that burns; *i.e.*, if it be the right cheek or ear, begin the rhyme with it, or *vice versa*.

3. Round about, round about, applety pie,
My daddy loves ale, and so do I.
Up, mammy, up, and bring us a cup,
And daddy and I will sup it all up.

4. I had a grandmother, but now she's dead,
And she learnt me to make cocklety-bread;
She up with her heels and down with her head,
And this is the way to make cocklety bread.

5. My grandy's seeke
And like to dee,
And I'll away make her
Some cocklety-bread,
Cocklety-bread;
And I'll away make her
Some cocklety-bread.

6. A man may care, and a man may spare,
And be always bare
If his wife be nought!
But a man may spend, and a man may lend,
And always have a friend,
If his wife be ought.

Four Alls.

1. Soldier . . I fight for all!
2. Parson . . I pray for all!!
3. Countryman . I work for all!!!
4. Farmer . . I pay for all!!!!

A Christmas Rhyme.

At Woodhouse, near Sheffield, the children when they go about amongst their neighbours to beg their Christmas box, make use of the following rhyming invocation:—

I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy new year,
A pocket full of money
And a barrel full of beer,
A horse and a gig
And a good fat pig
To serve you all the year.
If you please, will you give me a Christmas box?

Beans at Funerals.

It was a custom with the heathens to distribute beans as a funeral dole, and hence its adoption by the Roman Catholic Church. The practice if not followed by some of the present generation was till a comparatively recent period, and remains chronicled in the following rhyme, which is still common:—

God save your saul,
Beans and all.

North Side of Churches.

Still-born and unbaptised children, persons executed in accordance with the law, *felo-de-se*, and in fact all persons who laid violent hands on their own persons and brought themselves to an unnatural death, persons excommunicated either by ecclesiastical or civil law, and a variety of other offences deprived those so transgressing of the benefit of Christian interment—that is, there was neither service nor tolling of bell. They were also buried "within the night on the backside of the church." This antipathy to interment on the north also in a minor degree extended itself to the west end of the church. Witness the west end of the cemetery-garth at High Coniscliffe, near Darlington, where till almost within the period of living memory no interments had taken place, the south and east portions alone being used.

Such also, strange to say, was the case in the crowded graveyard attached to All Saints in Newcastle, up to the year 1826, and probably may even still be the case. This circumstance I gather from a mass of curious and valuable notes on a speech of John Fenwick, Esq., of Newcastle, touching the propriety of obtaining "a new place of sepulture." *Newcastle on-Tyne* (2nd ed.), 1826, p. 22. The custom also prevails in Scotland.

Popular Names for certain Playing Cards.

Ace of diamonds	The Earl of Cork.
Nine of diamonds	The curse of Scotland.
Six of hearts	The grace card.
Knave	A Bosworth man.
Queen of clubs	Queen Bess.
Four of spades	Ned Stokes.
Knave of clubs	A Sunderland fitter.

The same card is called in Westmoreland "Curwen's card."

Four of hearts	Hob Collingwood.

Seventh Son.

On the birth of a seventh son, it is still observed that he must be a doctor. In the olden time a seventh son was believed to be able to cure the king's evil, as well as the kings themselves. The seventh son of a seventh son was blessed with divine attributes of a still more unlimited power.

Honouring the Dead.

The custom still remains, though only to a very limited extent, of a person halting, although riding, for a moment, when in the act of passing a funeral procession, and taking off his hat. I admire this ancient usage, and would that it were universally practised by all professing Christians. [This is customary in the south of Scotland.]

Arvel Dinners.

Anciently it was only customary to have an arvel dinner (*i.e.*, funeral feast) on the decease of persons who were possessed of valuable effects, when the friends and neighbours of the family of the deceased were invited to dine on the day of interment. The custom is no doubt of great antiquity. At this solemn festival the corpse was publicly exposed. The dead are still so exposed in many eastern nations, and 'tis very probable that we derive the custom from our Roman conquerors.

A dinner of this class is expressly ordered under the will of Will'me Aslackbye, of Richmonde, gentlema', 3rd March, 1573.

Others, again, in their wills order to the contrary, as did Phil. Hagthorpe, of Nettleworth, in this county, in his will, 1640, charging his son as he will answer him before God for it, esteeming it "a grete vanity to bestow a grete dinner and

other charges vainly on men when they are gone." *Surtees*, ii. 204. On the contrary John Lively (vicar) of Kelloe, orders £30 to be expended on his funeral. He died 1651.

"At Bowes, Yorks., where ye Arvel Dinner still prevails, the chief and chosen dish at the well spread board is a rich veal pie, well stored with currants and raisins, and of sweet spices. The funeral pie was ate at an early period, and is described as being made of 'shrid meates.' These dinners were whiles set forth in the middest of the chancell of the church after the interment." * In some districts of England formerly no women went to men's funerals, nor men to the funerals of women. †

"In northern customs duty was exprest
To friends departed by their funeral feast."‡

The Cradle.

In all sales, either under distraint for rent or common debt, it is an ancient and invariable custom to leave the cradle unsold, and the original owner is at liberty to repossess it.

Leaping the Well.

The singular and filthy custom of leaping the well on St. Mark's Day, at Alnwick, fell into almost total disuse this year, and it is almost more than probable that the year 1852 will see the usage entirely abandoned. Peace to its ashes!

An Irish Stone.

A stone bearing the above name is still preserved by my respected friend Mr. Thomas Hedley, of New Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, son of Mr. Thomas Hedley, of Woolaw, in

* Sharpe's *Survey of London*, bk. i. p. 259.
† Misson's *Travels in England*, p. 91.
‡ King's *Art of Cookery*, p. 65.

Redesdale. These stones were at one time common in the dales of Northumberland, and were used as a charm to deter frogs, toads, and the whole of the serpent tribe from entering the dwelling-house of their possessor. In size the stone is three-and-a-quarter inches in diameter, of a cake form, is of a pale brown or dark drab colour, and about three-quarters of an inch thick in the middle where it is the thickest. It is unperforated, and therefore of a genus quite distinct from the Holy Stones, which are still so common, in the north especially.*

God speed them weel.

John Bowser, a quondam parish clerk of Coniscliffe, used on the first publication of a Banns of marriage to pronounce the pretty little benison of "God speed them weel!" on the happy couple, who the moment before were "thrown over the church balks;" which use, in conjunction with his broad local dialect, invariably caused a smile and a blush, not only on the glowing visage of the clerk himself, but also that of the whole adult portion of his hearers.

Bowing towards the East.

Many straggling instances remain, not only of ancient people, but also their offspring, bending the body towards the east in adoration, ere they enter their pew or stall, and no doubt in very many instances without knowing either the meaning or origin of the custom.

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* Recently this stone was sent to me to examine. It is a flattish, smooth, honey-coloured quartzose sub-circular stone, apparently from river gravel. It had been oiled to keep it shining. It has now been presented to the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Mr. Thomas Hedley, the original holder, was usually known as "The Little King of Woolaw."—*Reminiscences of Samuel Donkin*, pp. 13, 78-9.—J. H.

River-Gods.

The belief of our credulous ancestry in a female river demon is still early implanted in the mind of childhood on the banks of the Tees. Peg-Powler is the evil goddess of the Tees; and many are the tales still told at Piersebridge, of her dragging naughty children into its deep waters when playing, despite the orders and threats of their parents, on its banks—especially on the Sabbath-day. And the writer still perfectly recollects being dreadfully alarmed in the days of his childhood lest, more particularly when he chanced to be alone on the margin of those waters, she should issue from the stream and snatch him into her watery chambers.

Sir Walter Scott in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, relates a story of the spirit of the Tweed compelling the lady of the Baron of Drummelzier to submit to his embraces; so that on the return of her lawful lord from the Holy Land he found his fair lady nursing a healthy boy, whose age did not correspond to the period of his departure. The lady, however, was believed, and the child, to whom the name of Tweedie was given, afterwards became Baron of Drummelzier and the chief of a powerful clan.*

The foam or froth which is occasionally seen floating on this river in large masses is called Peg Powler's Suds, and the finer and less sponge-like froth is known by that of Peg Powler's Cream.

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* "According to a favourite mythic story, the first of the Tweedies was the child of a species of water-spirit or genius of the Tweed, and hence the name. Records show that the earlier members of the family were designated from their lands on the Tweed; as, for example, 'John of Tuedie.'"—*History of Peeblesshire*, by William Chambers, p. 422, note.—J. H.

Mr. Keightley (a high authority on these matters), says that the Thames, Avon, and a few other English rivers which he does not name, seem never to have been the abode of a neck or kelpy.

Wedding Custom.

The custom of giving a ribbon to be run for is still extensively practised at weddings in the rural districts of the southern portion of the Bishopric.

Christening Custom.

A few families still adopt the practice of taking a slice of the Christening cake along with them, when taking the child to be received and engrafted into the congregation and body of Christ's Church, and making an offering of it to the first person they meet. Should this be a man they say the next child born in the village will be a male, if a woman, it will be a female!

Holy or Lucky Stones.

These stones, also called hag, (? witch), adder or snake-stones, and by the Scots fairy-cups, are occasionally seen suspended to the tester of a bedhead to prevent the nightmare. They are also placed over the backs of cows or other beasts as an efficacious remedy and preventive of the malady called hoose or huse; that is, difficulty of breathing. These stones may be considered holy or sacred in a twofold sense; first, because they have a hole through them; and secondly, because like holy-water, they are equally beneficial in keeping all sorts, kinds and descriptions of evil spirits at a safe distance.

Note.—These stones to be at all efficacious must be holed naturally. One hung over the head of a horse will prevent its sweating in the stable. (See the *ovum anguinum* of the

Gauls described by Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* l. xxix., ciii.) The name is also applied to "celts" (*i.e.*, stone-weapons).

Tansy Pudding.

This piece of olden cookery is yet to be occasionally met with in Northumberland and the County Palatine. The late Mr. Church, the house surgeon of Newcastle Infirmary, was particularly fond of tansy puddings, and his cook was, I understand, an excellent hand at preparing them.

Old Rothbury.

In the four northern counties we meet with the following names and places to which the word old is attached. In Northumberland we have Old Town, Old Hepple, Old Learmouth, Old Bewick, Old Yeavering, Old Middleton, Old Heaton, Old Lyham, Old Felton, Old Helsey, Old Ridley, Old Rothbury. In Cumberland, Old Malbray, Old Scales, Old Carlisle, Old Park, Old Town, Old Wall, Old Penrith. In Westmoreland, Old Hutton, Old Town, Old Appleby. In Durhamshire, Old Hall, Old Park, Old Acres, Old Durham.

Fish and Ring.

The town of Pickering is said to have been built by King Peridurus, about 270 years before the birth of Christ, and to have derived its name from the circumstance of that prince losing a ring when washing himself in ye River Costa, which ring was afterwards found in the belly of a pike. Hence Pike-ring, now Pickering.

A fish and ring story is also attached to the ancient and knightly family of Anderson, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which is said to have happened about the year 1559. This ring, I believe, is still preserved by the family. There is also a singular Yorkshire legend of this class, in which a knight of the name of

Tempest acts his part most cruelly. This latter story has not only given origin to a penny Chap Book, still highly popular, but also to a very excellent ballad, entitled, "The Yorkshire Garland, or the Cruel Knight and the Fortunate Farmer's Daughter. In three Parts, &c. &c." 8pp., containing 60 verses, a printed copy of which is in the writer's possession.

Thunder Stone.

The quartz pebble, which is so common in the beds of rivers and also in tillage fields, is popularly known by the name of "thunder," or rather "thunner staane," and is believed to have dropped from the clouds during a thunder storm.

Crossing the Witches Out.

This useful and necessary ceremony is performed by all good housekeepers the moment they lay the leaven-trough, containing the batch of dough, down upon the hearthstone to rise previous to baking. The process is simple, and is performed by making the sign of the cross thereon with the forefinger of the right hand; and this act not only prevents the dough from sticking to the pasteboard, but also from falling, as it is termed, both before and after putting into the oven. It also prevents witches exercising any of their devilish arts in connection therewith. My housekeeper performs this duty as regularly as the baking-day comes.

Bachelors and Old Maids.

A man may not legally be termed an old bachelor until he hath attained the age of fifty years, three months, and three days; but as regards the precise period at which a lady becomes an old maid it is undecided, both by ancients and moderns. Youth of heart may exist for a hundred years, and even more.

John Wycliffe.

At Lutterworth, Leicestershire, they have a tradition that since the bones of Wycliffe were burnt, and thrown into the Swift, the river has never overflowed its banks.

Button Rhyme. Westmoreland.

A tinkler, a tailor,
A soldier, or a sailor,
A rich man, a poor man,
A priest, or a parson,
A ploughman, or a thief.

Bows and Arrows.

In a survey of Carlisle Castle, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there was found in one of the rooms twelve bows of yew, and seventy of elm, all unfit for service. Pretty strong proof of their not being much needed. The customary number of arrows contained in a quiver to the battlefield was twenty-four, "trussed in a thrumme." The best arrows were made of asp; but ash, oak, and birch were also used. The arrow for warfare was thirty-two inches in length, with a sharp unbarbed iron head of four inches or thereabouts. The length of the English border bow was generally five feet eight inches, with a bend of about nine inches. The bowstring was of plaited or twisted silk or hemp, but where the notches for the arrow were placed, they were made round. Bows were made of elm, witch hazel or ash, but yew was the favourite wood. The planting of yew in ground appropriated to interments, doubtless arose from the fact of its nature being so prejudicial and poisonous to horned cattle. In the reign of Edward III., bows of laburnum * were in use.

* Also called awburne and awburne saugh.

These, however, were probably imported, as I don't find that tree was then introduced into England. Ascham saith the Scots hath a proverb that "Every English archer carried under his belt twenty-four Scots," which evidently alludes to the above number of unerring shafts. The range of a good bow was from three to four hundred yards, and, at a moderate distance an arrow would pass through an inch board. Six arrows might be shot in the time required for the loading of a musket.

About the year 1417, the king, Henry IV., ordered his "sherives" of many counties to pluck from every goose six wing feathers for the purpose of improving arrows. Hall and Lloyd's *Cyclopædia*, "Archery." Those of a bird of three years old were to be preferred, and that the feathers may drop off themselves when ripe. One of the three feathers in each arrow was grey to regulate the placing.

To rain Swords and Pistols.

The above, and also to rain sticks and stones, dogs and cats, awd wives and pipe stoppers, grey meears and fiddlers,*&c., &c., are common similes when speaking of an extremely heavy fall of rain in the north of England. I have somewhere an account of a shower of flesh and blood, but cannot at this moment lay my hands on it.

During a heavy rain in India the natives say:—"It pours down monkeys with their mouths open."

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* It rains dogs and cats, and little pitchforks.
It rains helter skelter.
It rains dogs and awde wives by dozens.
It rains dogs and cats, and aw'll lap mysell int' skins.
Westmoreland.

Vulgar Errors.

There is a superstition in the north of England, that blankets or petticoats formed of a material made from fallen wool, are very apt to have lice,* and by my fay I do think there may be truth in the observation, especially if worn by dirty folks, and seldom or never washed.

It is a pretty generally diffused article of belief that the dust of a fuzzy ball cast in the eyes will cause blindness (hence in Scotland called "blind man's bellowses.")

Soon teeth soon toes. This means that if your baby's teeth begin to sprout early, you will soon have toes, *i.e.*, another baby.

4. The ceasing to flow of the celebrated Yorkshire springs, known by the name of the Nipseys or Gipseys, for an unusual length of time, is said to foretell dearth of corn, and scarcity of provisions.

5. The egg given on a child's first visit should be preserved; it betokeneth good fortune to the future man.

6. Red garters are considered by certain ladies an effectual charm against the "rheumatiz." But I believe to act properly, *i.e.*, effectually, they should be stolen.

7. Fill the cavities of extracted teeth with salt, and burn in the fire saying the while:—

> Fire, fire, burn baan,
> God send me my tuthe agaan.

8. A child should not be suffered to look in a glass before it is twelve months old.

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* ["A lupis occisarum ovium pelles pediculos procreunt."—Aristotle, cited in *Joh. Johnstoni Thaumatographia Naturalis*, p. 319, Amsterdam, 1661; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, lxi. c. 33.—J. H.]

9. To rock an empty cradle is considered ominous of a coming occupant.

10. Many look upon it as a wicked piece of presumption on the part of parents to endeavour to perpetuate a favourite baptismal name, when death has snatched away its first bearer, and should the second, third, or fourth of the name survive (and it is a common observation that such is rarely the case) he is sure to prove a "graceless prodigal." *Apropos*, I have a not far distant relative who is the third representative of his name in his parent's family whose opportunities of doing well have been many, yet being "a bit of a graceless" the fellow never would try. He is still living, and a truthful monument of the impropriety, folly, and impiety of his parent's wickedness in thus tempting God!!! [Himself?].

11. If the first person a funeral procession meets on taking a corpse to the church for interment is a male, a female is sure to be the next who dies in the village or district; if a female, then it will be a male.

12. The vulgar superstition which is common to all the people of a Germanic origin, of the corpse of a murdered person bleeding on being touched by the murderer is still maintained.

13. If the flesh and joints of a corpse retain their softness and pliability, it portends, it is said, another death, if not in the household at least in the same family, in quick time.

Brimstone Pan.

In the days of flint, steel, and brimstone matches, it was the invariable custom, and no doubt an ancient one, to enfold the bowl portion of the brimstone pan after using in paper, and so hang it away till next wanted. Whence the origin of this usage?

Charm for Foul in the Foot.

Horned cattle are subject to a filthy disease in their feet, called foul; the popular remedy for which is a sort of charm, to wit, notice upon what portion of turf the beast treads with its diseased foot, and scoop it up with a spade or large knife, around which tie a piece of cord and suspend it in the open air; and as the said turf wastes away by exposure to the weather, the animal's foot will recover from the effects of the foul. Many still use no other remedy, looking upon it as an infallible cure.

Church Use.

The old though now, 1856, superannuated clerk of Manfield Church, Yorks, at the conclusion of the Gospel used to respond, Thanks be to God for His Holy Word.

Need Fire.

The father of the writer, who died 1843, in his 79th year, had a perfect remembrance of a great number of persons, belonging to the upper and middle classes of his native parish of Bowes, assembling on the banks of the river Greta to work for need fire. A disease among cattle, called the murrain, then prevailed to a very great extent through that district of Yorkshire. The cattle were made to pass through the smoke raised by this miraculous fire, and their cure was looked upon as certain, and to neglect doing so was looked upon as wicked.

This fire was produced by the violent and continued friction of two dry pieces of wood until such time as it was thereby obtained.

"To work as though one was working for need fire" is a common proverb in the North of England.

River Ouse.

It is said that the River Ouse has on two occasions divided and opened a dry passage of three miles in extent, first in the year 1399, before the Civil Wars, and again in the year 1648, before the reign of King Charles.

Wedding Omen.

It is looked upon as decidedly unlucky for a bridal party to be making their vows before the altar of Hymen during the striking of the church clock. It portends the death of the bride or bridegroom before the expiration of the year.

Taylors.

The primitive use of employing taylors in the making of ladies' wearing apparel has only fallen into entire desuetude within the last sixty years.

Nobody Coming to Marry Me.—(Printed Set.)

Last night the dogs did bark,
I went to the gate to see,
When ev'ry lassie had her spark,
But nobody comes to me.
And it's oh, dear! what will become of me!
Oh, dear! what shall I do?
Nobody coming to marry me,
Nobody coming to woo.

My father's a hedger and ditcher,
My mother does nothing but spin,
And I a pretty young girl,
But the money comes slowly in.
And it's oh, dear! &c.

They say I am beauteous and fair,
They say I am scornful and proud;
Alas! I must now despair,
For ah! I am grown very old.
And it's oh, dear! &c.

And now I must die an old maid;
Oh, dear! how shocking the thought!
And all my beauty must fade,
But I'm sure it's not my fault.
And it's oh, dear! &c.

Anon.

From *The Lyre*, published at Edinburgh, about 1825.

A Lamentable Dittie; or, Juvenile Funeral Hymn.

What say you to the following Lament for the Dead? I heard it sung (3rd Aug., 1849) in not very doleful measure by more than half a dozen bairns; and was so much taken with the beauty of the composition that I was induced to implant it on the tablet of my memory till I found time to write it down in a book. I must premise that the children were playing the ceremonies attendant on a funeral, and the eldest of the little group, who could not be more than eight years of age, gave it in right clerk-like style, time by time, as follows:

Poor Johnny's deed that nice young man,
That nice young man,
That nice young man,
We'se nivver see him more;
He used to wear a fustian coat,
A fustian coat,
A fustian coat,
That buttoned up before!

It is scarcely necessary to give the name of the tune, as the

rhymes of this somewhat curious threnodie, intuitively set themselves to their own right proper tune.

Nursery Rhymes.

1. Brenky my nutty-cock,*
Brenk him away;
My nutty-cock's nivver
Been brenk'd to-day:
What wi' carding and spinning on t' wheel,
We've nivver had time to brenk nutty-cock weel:
But let to-morrow come ivver so sune,
My nutty-cock it sall be brenk'd by nune.

Com. to J. O. Halliwell, Esq.

2. Bonny lass, canny lass, will ta be mine?
Thou'se neither wesh dishes, nor sarra the swine;
Thou sall sit on a cushion, and sew up a seam,
And thou sall eat strawberries, sugar, and cream.

Com. to J. O. Halliwell, Esq.

3. Black and white is my delight,
And green and yellow's bonny,
I woud'nt part with mi' sweetheart,
For all my father's money.

4. I'll away yhame,
And tell my dyame,
That all my geese,
Are ghane, but yhan;
And its a steg,
And its lost a leg,
And it'll be ghane,
By I get yhame.

* Nutty-cock is an olden term of endearment.

5. Rosemary green and lavender blue,
Thyme and sweet marjoram, hyssop and rue.

6. If! If! If!
If I had gold in goupins,
If I had money in store,
If I had gold in goupins,
My laddie should work no more.
He should have a maid to wait upon him,
Another to curl his hair;
He should have a man to buckle his shoe,
And then he should work na mair.

7. On Royal Oak Day.

The twenty-ninth of May
Is Royal Oak Day;
If you winnot give us a holiday,
We'll all run away.

A rather superior rhyme of the school-boy class.

Burying Cakes, Westmoreland.

The primeval custom of presenting each relative and friend of the deceased when they attend the corpse-house on the day of interment with an arvel cake, still, everything but universally, prevails in many towns and villages in Westmoreland. At Kirkby Stephen these offerings are of no trifling number at one individual funeral, nor yet of trifling individual dimensions. These cakes, which should always be pocketed [this word must be received figuratively; the fact is they are too large for the modern pocket of either sex, and the cake has in general to be tied up in the pocket napkin of its possessor] and taken home, are, I can assure your readers, of that magnitude that one of

them would be considered quite enough to serve three or four "maydenly laydies" at a tea-drinking. I have on various occasions seen these cakes but never tasted them; but those who have inform me that the popular colloquial name of burying cake is a very correct one; for that, owing to some peculiar spice which is commixt with the flour, fruit, &c., they always, both in smell and taste, remind them of a clay-cold corpse and an oaken coffin. Occasionally as many as 100 are given at a funeral, and the cost varies from 3d. to 4d. each cake.

May Kittens.

"Never keep a May kitten." Old saying.

Kittens born in May are even still proverbially spoken of and looked upon as bad mousers. I only within the present year heard a female say that "she wad nivver mair keep a May kitten as lang as she lived, for they were just good for naught at all!" [They are unlucky to keep; and besides, they suck the breath of very young infants: From Long Benton, Newcastle.]

Death Omen. Howling of Dogs.

The howling of dogs, either by night or day, is still considered to portend death, either in the house nearest to which they howl, or to some of their kith or kindred.

Man in the Moon.

Our ancestors believed that this imaginary personage was a veritable man, of flesh, blood, and bones, such as we are, who, by way of example to all succeeding generations, was taken up into the air donned in his working clothes, along with his fork of tree, on the prongs of which he carried a bundle of sticks (thorns), which he had stolen, across his right shoulder,

a horn lanthorn in his left hand, and also his little dog (whose name I forget), and the whole of them stuck against the face of the moon, and all for transgressing the fourth command in the Decalogue. The following stanza (the third) of an old "three man's song," adds a valuable item to the traditions in connection with this relic of olden mythology. The name of the song is "Martin said to his Man":—

I see a man in the moone,
Fie! man, Fie!
I see a man in the moone,
Who's the Foole now?
I see a man in the moone,
Clouting of St. Peter's shoone;
Thou hast well drunken man;
Who's the Foole now?

Deuteromelia, or the second part of *Musick's Melodies*, 4to, 1609.

"As for the forme of those spots, some of the vulgar thinke they represent a man, and the poets guesse 'tis the boy Endymion, whose company shee loves so well that she carries him with her. Others will have it onely to be the face of a man as the moone is usually pictured; but Albertus thinkes rather that it represents a lyon, with his taile towards the east and his head to the west, and some others (Eusebius Nieremb. *Hist. Nat.*, lib. viii. cxv.) have thought it to be very much like a fox, and certainly 'tis as much like a lyon as that in the Zodiacke, or as Ursa Major is like a beare."—Bishop Wilkin's *Discovery of a New World*, 3rd edit. Lond. 1640, p. 100.

This myth is thought to be the most ancient of all our still popular superstitions. Many, very many, there are who can see all these figures in the moon; but, truth to tell, I never could. All that my weak vision has been able to discover in the moon amounts to no more than two eyes, a nose, and a

mouth, just as we see "ye ould laydie" depictured in the almanacks of Francis Moore, physician, astrologer, and schoolmaster. Others who are totally lacking of faith look upon both matters as mere moonshine. Be it as it may, we have, however, an old, very old, proverb, which holds out timely warning to the present generation of unbelievers, to wit: "Have a care lest the churl fall out o' the moon."

The origin of this myth will be found in Numbers c. xv., 32, *et seq.* Alexander Necham, a writer of the twelfth century, notices the popular belief in this fable. See Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales*, p. 229.

Palm Crosses.

These beautiful and interesting relics of ancient days and forgotten ceremonies are still often to be seen in the hands of children in the North of England on Palm Sunday. The remaining portion of the year they hang upon a nail against the whitewashed wall of mayhap the poor man's only room; and being formed of gay colours artistically arranged in one, two, and occasionally three crosses, are no mean or despicable appendage. In the triumphant days of popery they were considered indispensable in the hands of old and young, rich and poor. Hence the proverb, "He that hath not a palm in his hands on Palm Sunday must have his hand cut off."

Urchins, varia Hedgehogs.

Another relic of the old world times in the Bishopric is that hedgehogs or urchins, as we call them, have still imputed to them the offence of sucking the milk of cows as they sleep. I have endeavoursd to dislodge the fable from the minds of several of the unlearned, but my endeavour to do so only tended to increase their olden faith.

Crossing out the Rainbow.

When a schoolboy I recollect that we were wont, on the appearance of a rainbow, to place a couple of straws or twigs on the ground in the form of a +, in order to dispel the sign in the heavens, or, as we termed it, to "cross out the rainbow."

Lucky Bone.

This relic of another olden superstition is now seldom seen, and still more seldom used, at least in the North. This bone, which was worn as an amulet round the neck to ensure good luck, and protect the wearer from fairies, witches, "and all sike like uncanny folk," was taken from the head of a sheep. Its form was that of T [Tau or cross], a sacred symbol not only in Christian, but also in Druidical monuments, and ancient and modern heraldry.

Lyke Wake.

The custom of waking the corpse still exists in a few families, but the use is now far from general. Every ancient usage in connection therewith has vanished in my resident locality; and I am glad to observe that I have never heard of a single instance of intoxication where practised.

Excessive Grief for the Dead.

An old woman still living (1854) in Piersebridge, who mourned with inordinate grief for a length of time the loss of a favourite daughter, asserts that she was visited by the spirit of her departed child, and earnestly exhorted not to disturb her peaceful repose by unnecessary lamentations and repinings at the will of God; and from that time she never grieved more.

Events of this kind were common a century ago. So the "Wife of Usher's Well."

[This popular belief receives an illustration from Proudlock's poems (a local Northumbrian writer, who died in early life, in 1826). In a tragic poem, entitled "Leah's Daughter," Dinah so grieves for the loss of Shechem, that his ghost appears to warn her that her lamentations disturbed him in the grave.

"*Ghost.* Dinah! am I thus rewarded
For the love unfeigned I bore?
Is thy lover's shade regarded?
Dinah, then, lament no more;
With thy oft-repeated 'woes'
Thou hast broken my repose.
Dry thy tears then; cease thy wailing—
Woful wander not from home,
Seeing all are unavailing—
They have brought me from the tomb;
But 'tis to bid thee cease:
Be at peace—and I'm at peace."—p. 112.]

"Leetening afore Death."

A dying person will occasionally not only be restored to all sense of memory and speech, show great vigour and alacrity, but will also arise from his bed and hold conversation with his family as if in perfect health. This is termed "a lightening before death."

"How oft when men are at the point of death,
Have they been merry? which their keepers call
A lightning before death."

Romeo and Juliet, act v., sc. 3.

Touching the Dead.

Doubtless this custom is of corresponding quality with one

previously noted on touching the body of a murdered person, and is equally to prove (though without the resting suspicion) that you are entirely guiltless of the death of the deceased, not in act alone, but also in prayer. This public exposure of the corpse was also to exculpate the heir and those entitled to the possessions of the deceased from fines and mulcts to the lord of the manor, and from all accusations of violence; so that the whole company might avouch that the person died fairly and without suffering any personal injury. Formerly, too, it was done to prevent the unhouseled spirit troubling you either by night or day. But we moderns, having, in part at least, renounced our belief in ghosts, say that it is to prevent our dreaming of seeing the dead body.

Bloody Stones.

Of these stones tradition still points out several with blood-stained tales of robbery and murder of benighted pedlar, traveller, or neighbour connected with them throughout the North of England. These stones are believed to have absorbed a portion of the blood of the murdered one, and it said that nothing can possibly remove it hence. In many cases the ghost of the departed is said to keep mournful watch by night upon them, to the great annoyance of the innocent and best disposed portion of the folks living near it. This I have always considered a very bad trait indeed in the character of English hobgoblins. Geologists, however, account for the marks in stones of this class in a more natural way, by asserting that they are natural ones, and in good sooth I give not only full credit to the assertion, but beg leave to confirm it.

Subterranean Passages.

Traditionary passages, of which so many legendary stories are

told, are obviously nothing more than the extensive sewers or vennels extending from the kitchens of the castle, mansions, and religious houses of olden time.

The swineherd of Will. Peverell, an English baron, having lost a brood-sow, descended through a deep abyss in the middle of an ancient and ruinous castle, situated on the top of a hill called Bech, in search of it. Though a violent wind commonly issued from this pit, he found it calm within, and pursued his way till he arrived at a subterranean region, pleasant and cultivated, with reapers cutting down the corn, though the snow remained on the surface of the ground above. Among the corn he discovered his sow, and was permitted to ascend with her and the pigs which she had farrowed. *Gervase of Tilbury*, p. 975.

By one of these passages the English repossessed themselves of the castle of Wark after the surprise and butchery of its garrison by Will. Halliburton of Fast Castle, 1319, when, in return for the death of Robert Ogle* and his troops, the English butchered the whole of the Scots.

A passage of this sort formerly extended from Anderson Place, Newcastle, in the direction of the Manors; and coins of Edward III. were found in it. By this underground communication King Charles is said to have attempted to escape.

An instance is also on record of an ancient fairyman making his complaint to Sir Godfrey MacCulloch, a Gallovidian knight, of a certain drain or common sewer, beneath Sir Godfrey's castle, which emptied itself directly into his chamber of dais. With courtesy the knight assured him of the speedy alteration of the drain, which was done accordingly. For this act, the old man, many years after, preserved Sir Godfrey from the scaffold when the executioner was ready to strike the fatal blow.

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* Ogle was not killed at all, see Fordun.

Tradition and real fact place this event in the year 1697. See Brockett's *Gloss.* vol. ii. p. 166, 3rd ed.

The earliest instance we have of an underground drain in connection with civil or military buildings occurs in the reign of Henry III., 1216.—Turner's *Domestic Architecture.*

There are old wives' tales of subterranean passages which connect the totally destroyed village of old Richmond, not only with Cradock Hall, at Gainford, on the opposite bank of the Tees, but also with Cliffe Hall, fully three miles down the river.

Money Digging.

King John was so impressed with the idea that Corbridge had been a large and populous city destroyed by an earthquake or some sudden and terrible invasion, when the inhabitants would be unable to remove their wealth, that he ordered his officers to make a diligent search for treasures which he supposed were buried beneath the ruins. Simonburn Castle "was pulled down to satisfy a violent curiosity the country people had for searching, like King John at Corbridge, and Nero at Carthage, for hidden treasure, where they succeeded no better than those two royal money hunters, who got nothing but rubbish for their pains."—Wallis, ii., 15. A singular dungeon tower, in Richmond Castle, Yorks, was cleaned out to a very great depth only a few years ago, with the same object in view and the same success.

Old Horse Shoes.

See *Lit. Gaz.*, Dec., 1851. Brockett's *North. Words*, ii., 60.

To find a horse-shoe is considered lucky. And the said horse-shoe nailed heel upwards upon the door or threshhold of the byre, stable, or dwelling-house of the finder, hinders the power of witches. In daleish districts great numbers are still to be seen so attached.

Burial at Cross-Roads.

John and Lancelot Younghusband committed suicide 10th November, 1818. "They" (the Younghusbands) "were two respectable and wealthy farmers just adjoining the town of Alnwick. The sensation must be imagined that pervaded the little town of Alnwick, when it was discovered that the brothers had committed suicide at the same time; consequently must have consulted and agreed to each other's self murder, if not assisted in it. This was the great difficulty with the jury, or they would have returned the usual verdict of temporary insanity. I was from home at the time; and in fact I heard of the dreadful event at Rothbury, and on my return I found the jury had returned a verdict of *felo de se*, and that I was called, upon the Coroner's warrant, along with my brother churchwardens and the constables of the parish, to inter the bodies in the public highway. I distinctly recollect that the coroner, Mr. T. A. Russell, told us the law did not require the burial to be at cross-roads. As we wished to spare the feelings of friends, and as a public footpath led through Alnwick churchyard, we thought we fulfilled the requirements of the law by interring the bodies along it, so as not to interfere with consecrated ground—which was done by making the graves in a direction opposite to the usual method. There they would have remained had not the late Sir David W. Smith sent for the parish officers, and threatened them with a prosecution at the suit of the Crown, if the bodies were not interred according to law in a public road.* It was not till the evening that the parish officers resolved to disinter and re-bury the bodies of the

* However much this command and threat might hurt the feelings of every relative and friend, still, as the law then stood, every disinterested and right-minded person must justify Sir David and the other magistrates in the part they acted in the matter.

unfortunate men, and this was carried out, though not exactly at midnight, nor were the graves made at cross-roads. The wish was to have the graves dug at the March between the Duke of Northumberland and Mr. Hewitson's estate at Heckley in a lane, called Hindly lane, leading from Heckley to Eglingham, where the Younghusbands farmed, and perhaps within a quarter of a mile from where the double suicidal act was committed, but the ground was so full of rocks, the gravediggers not being able speedily to accomplish their work, so that we gave directions for them to come further down the lane, which might be four or five hundred yards from the March, but not at a crossing; there the graves were dug at the side of the road, not where carts and horses travelled. I do not think it was ten o'clock when we returned from the melancholy duty with most distressed minds and harassed feelings.* As the law was shortly afterwards altered so as to allow the bodies of suicides to be interred, in churchyards without ceremony, I really think that this painful circumstance had some influence on our legislators. Mr. William Davidson, chemist and druggist, of Alnwick, was foreman of the jury, and as he takes much interest in local events, and the history of the place, he will be able to supply further information upon this enquiry, which I feel incompetent to do." *Private Correspondence*, 1850.

It is however said that the bodies did not rest long at the wayside, being removed under the cloud of night, and that they found a third final resting place in the graveyard of Alnwick Church.

Anciently a stake was driven through the body of a suicide, but in the above instance this act was dispensed with.

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* The burial was witnessed by a vast concourse of people from Alnwick and the surrounding neighbourhood.

["Go to Heckley Fence" may have originated from the circumstances above related.]

Roman Burials.

The Romans most generally interred north and south, and occasionally with the head to the south. Numerous double and occasionally treble interments are met with, in which the bodies, singular to say, are reversed; vulgo, "heads and heels." Many instances of double interments have been met with at Piersebridge.

Sundry Northern Proverbs.

1. He's a ganger, like Willy Pigg's dick ass.
2. A bumble kite a spider in't—a bad bargain.
3. It's a hobbly road, as the man said when he fell over a cow.
4. Rather better than common, like Nanny Helmsey's pie.
5. Changeable weather, quoth Molly Hogg, rain every day.
6. As great a thief as Billy P—r, who stole the bolt off his own door.
7. I said nought and I said nought, and still they took hold of my words.
8. I'll pepper your rams.
9. The old yow's the better tupe.
10. High-days and holidays and baan-fire neets.
11. He sticks up his riggin (*i.e.*, the backbone), like a puzzon'd rattan.
12. To catch Peggy Wiggan.
13. To use some of Michael Pickering's blacking, *i.e.*, none at all.
14. As throng as Throp's wife, when she hanged herself with the dishclout.
15. May Jemmy Johnson squeeze me.
16. It's sure and sartain, as said Jonathan Martin.
17. She's ready donn'd, like Willy Ho's (Hall's) dog.
18. Like Isaac Ebdale's stockings, they're no fit.
19. "A little of both," as Harry Hodgson said.
20. It's January, like David Pearse's gin. David should have said genuine, but not being, as it would seem, a learned man, he fell into error.

Worm in the Tail.

This is a sort of imaginary disease wonderfully common in horned cattle, to cure which a portion of the end of the animal's tail is cut off in order to make it bleed; but the more general fashion is to make in it a perpendicular incision near to the end and to rub therein a composition of salt, soot, tar, turpentine, and garlick, tightly enveloping all with a rag and cord.

Butchers as Jurymen.

The common vulgar error of excluding a butcher from juries, especially in cases of blood, although it may be said to be exploded, is still strongly impressed upon the minds of the lower classes, at least so far as propriety goes. I believe that an ancient law, still standing on the statute book, actually forbade it.

Mayden Assize: White Gloves.

It was formerly the custom to present the judge with a pair of white gloves when no criminals were condemned to be hanged. The use now is to make the offering when there are no prisoners for trial. A pair of gloves also, not many years ago, was the customary offering by a person claiming a reversal of outlawry. Amongst swordsmen, to send or cast the gauntlet, *i.e.*, a glove of mail, was esteemed a challenge of defiance.

To Bite the Glove or Nails.

To bite the glove or finger nails in conversation, even with a friend, is still looked upon as ominous of passion or hatred. Sir Walter Scott has a note thereon. See *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, cant. vi., st. 7. Shakespeare also remarks it as a gesture of contempt.

The Kissing Bush.

At York and Newcastle-on-Tyne this ancient token of a mirthful and I hope innocent custom is still to be seen at Christmas. The bush is formed of mistletoe, evergreens, ribbons, and oranges. May its presence continue to be witnessed, not only in the kitchens but also in the entrance hall for centuries untold.

The Petting Stone.

Marriages celebrated at the Church of Lindisfarne, in Holy Island, are said to be unfortunate if the bride, on making the essay, cannot step the length of it. This stone is supposed to be the pedestal of St. Cuthbert's Cross, anciently held in superstitious veneration. [In some places the bride, after coming out of the church, was lifted over a stone, called "the petting stone," that she may never take the pet.]

The Mosstrooper's Grave.

"From the Lake of Grindon, in Northumberland, a small burn issues and flows about two miles in a westerly course, when it is suddenly lost in a fissure of its rocky passage in the limestone, popularly known as a Swallow-hole. Tradition states that a young mosstrooper, in attempting to rob a farmyard in the neighbourhood, was shot by one of the servants and brought to the lonely Swallow-hole and there buried. Upon this tradition a ballad was founded, which I fear is now lost. I remember it as very pretty. The grave is worthy of its lawless occupant."—*Private Correspondence*, 1849.

Selling oneself to the Devil.

"The idea of men and women thus disposing of themselves

for wealth and power, for a certain term of years, is not yet exploded in Weardale. At the expiration of the period Satan appears in person, and not only claims the soul, but carries off the body also. It is supposed the victim can be saved by giving the fiend anything black when he appears to him, as a black hen, black cat, dog, &c. So that it would seem his infernal majesty is either easily satisfied or easily gulled."—*Private Correspondence.*

Charm for Bewitched Cattle.

An acquaintance of mine, in County Westmeria, had such a singular succession of ill luck among his cattle that his neighbours, as well as himself, came to the conclusion that they were bewitched by awde Sally Mackick, who lived at no great distance from the farmstead. An eldern, well versed in these matters, recommended the owner to take the heart of a cow which had died that morning and stick it full of pins, and afterwards plunge it into the midst of a fire made up for the purpose at the dead hour of midnight. All made ready, the heart was dropt into the middle of a huge roaring fire in an awful silence and covered up, when (*mirabile dictu*) instantly the most awful knock came upon the window, where the work was going forward, that the good folks ever heard in their lives, and it was not, as may be supposed, to bid them hasten to their beds. In the morning not a relic of either heart or pins was to be met with. From that period their cattle got almost instantaneously well, and they lost no more for many long years.

My story, however, ends not here. The supposed witch, after this, to make use of the language of my narrator, "dowed na mair, she dwined away, and did na mair good (evil?), and nobbut lived a few weeks, and she's now where the Lord pleases."

Battling Stones.

These now unused relics of a former period are still numerous throughout the length and breadth of the land, and must remain so, unless they have the ill-luck to meet the fate of the noble Piersebridge specimen, which was blown to fragments by means of gunpowder, by a fellow in the place, A.D. 1826. They were generally found on the margin of a stream, with the upper surface inclining towards the water. These stones were used by thrifty housewives some thirty years ago, whereupon to beat, battle, or beetle their home-made linens or huckabacks, which even then pretty generally prevailed for domestic wear. The linen was thrown into the running stream and gradually drawn upon the stone, and there beat with a beetle or battling staff. The Piersebridge stone lay on the north side of Carlebury beck, a yard or two below the present footbridge. Another stone of this class, but greatly deficient in magnitude, still exists on the Cliffe side of the Tees, with one side in the river. It is on the premises of the George and Dragon Inn, not far from the bridge. I have many times seen it used. It is a granite boulder, as was the other.

Nursery Rhymes.

A Supposition.

As I suppose, and as I suppose,
The barber shaved the Quaker,
And as I suppose, he cut off his nose,
And lap't it up in a paper.

Running or Leaping Rhymes.

Bellasay, Bellasay, what time o' day,
One o'clock, two o'clock, three and away.

Varia in second line, "time to away." Bellasay is evidently

a corruption of bell-horses. At Wooler, instead of "Bellasay" "coach-horses" is used.

An auld Wife's End.

Did ye ivver see an auld wife,
An auld, auld, auld, wife ;
Did ye ivver see an auld wife
Hung ower a dyke to dry ?
The day was het, the wife was fat,
And she began to fry ;
So there was an end o' the auld wife,
Hung ower the dyke to dry !

A Mother's saying.

My son is my son till he gets a wife,
But my daughter's my daughter all the days of her life.

Southernwood Rhymes.

1. Lads' love, lasses' delight,
If t' lads doesn't come
The lasses 'll flite.

2. Lads' love is lasses' delight,
And if the lads don't love
Lasses will flite [*i.e.* scold.]

Charms.

Ash-Leaf Charms.

1. The even ash-leaf in my left hand,
The first man I meet shall be my husband.

2. The even ash-leaf in my glove,
The first I meet shall be my true love.

3. The even ash-leaf in my breast,
The first man I meet is who I love best.

4. The even ash-leaf in my hand,
The first I meet shall be my man.

5. Even ash! Even ash! I pluck thee,
This night my true love for to see;
Neither in his rick, nor in his rear,
But in the clothes he does every day wear.

6. An even ash, or four-leaved clover,
You'll see your true love before the day's over.

7. The even ash-leaf in my bosom,
The first I meet shall be my husband.

8. Find odd-leaved ash, and even-leafed clover,
And you'll see your true love afore the day's over.

9. Even ash, I do thee pluck,
Hoping for to have good luck;
But if no good luck I get from thee,
I wish I'd left thee on the tree.

Docken or Nettle Rhymes.

1. Docken in and nettle out
Like an awde wife's dishclout.

2. Out nettle, in dock,
Dock shall have a new smock;"
But nettle shan't ha' nothin'.

3. In dock, out nettle sting
Nettle sting'd me.
If thou doesn't cure me
I'll kill thee!

[The rhymes under these two headings have been derived from several sources.]

Folks never catch cold at Church.

This is a saying very common in the mouths of old people, and is no doubt often an inducement to many to leave their own comfortable homes on a cold, comfortless, (splishy-splashy) * Sabbath morning, and travel a couple of miles or more to attend divine service in one of our doubly-damp country churches, which has turned green internally, not alone from the effects of antiquity, but still more so from the exclusion of a free circulation of air, from the afternoon of the previous Sabbath; where it is too certain numbers have caught colds, which ere long have hurried them prematurely to a grave not much more cold or damp than the church.

Bowed or Crooked Sixpence.

A crooked sixpence worn continuously in the left side pocket is looked upon as indicative of good luck to the wearer. I know a lady whom I have seen turn not less than half a dozen out of her purse at one time.

"Bowed money appears anciently to have been sent as a token of love and affection from one relation to another."—Brand.

Gun-firing Superstition.

In the sailors' creed the following article occurs, viz.:—That if a gun is fired over a dead body, lying at the bottom of the sea, the concussion will burst the gall bladder, and, mermaid like, it will ascend to the surface head foremost.

The belief that on the bursting of the gall bladder a dead creature, be it fish, animal, or human, will rise to the surface of the water, is not peculiar to civilized life; it is also asserted by the Indians of America.

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* So pronounced in the north.

Black Cats and Lovers.

In a house where a black cat is kept the spinster portion of its population will never lack plenty of sweethearts.

N.B.—This piece of folk-lore I gleaned from a young lady, who spoke, as she herself told me, not from hearsay information, but practical experience.

Rhymes.

1. Whenever the cat of the house is black,
   The lasses of lovers will have no lack.

2. Kiss the black cat, an' that'll make ye fat;
   Kiss ye the white one and that'll make ye lean.

[It ought to be said that this is a childish off-take of one who is constantly inquiring "What?" and not a piece of folk-lore implying belief.—J. H.]

Corpse Usages.

The old use of covering looking-glasses with a white linen cloth in the room wherein a corpse lies still generally prevails. I have thought that this custom was to prevent the image of the dead being reflected in the glass.

A pewter plate and a handful of salt placed upon the body of the corpse is now but rarely seen. About Bowes a sod (turf) occasionally, however, assumes the duty and place of the salt. The folks say it is done to prevent the formation of gases of the body. A bowl of water is usually placed beneath the bed.

I myself have seen a "stranger in blood" lean over a corpse just previous to removal, and in silence repeat a short prayer. Of the nature of the prayer I am ignorant.

Sleek or Calendering Stones.

These domestic utensils of olden time are now wholly out of use. Their form has been aptly described as that of a large mushroom reversed, the stalk forming the handle. One, *penes me*, is formed of common green or bottle glass, in diameter 4½ inches, and in height 6½ inches. They are now very rare.

Cats and Corpses.

It is a common remark that a cat will not settle in a house with an unburied corpse. I know not how far the truth of this saw may extend; but this I do know, that on the decease of the writer's maternal parent, the house cat left the dwelling and took to the garden, where, by scratching the earth, she made herself a kind of lair and extended herself therein, like a hare in her form, with her nose partially covered with loose soil. This I noticed on many occasions during the period the body was uninterred.

Bell-Horses.

The last set of bell-horses either seen or heard in the North of England were kept by the late Charles Michell, Esq., (of eccentric memory), of Forest Hall, Richmond. Although it must now be more than 40 years since I last saw those horses, in their handsome trappings, pass through Piersebridge, I can nevertheless fancy I still hear the music of their bells tingling in my ears. These bells were suspended on a wooden frame work, which frame was covered with a parti-coloured worsted fringe.

The Rev. Mr. Darnell, rector of Stanhope, has in his possession a bell of this sort, which is considered a great curiosity.

It used formerly to be suspended at the neck of the leading horse (proverbially known as the bell-horse) of the trains by which the salters of olden time conveyed their merchandise over the moors of that district. It is very massive, and has a fine harmonious tone.

Goats.

It is still a generally received opinion, that one of these animals kept about an inn or farmstead is not only conducive to the health of the other domestic animals, but also brings good luck to the owner.

On Children.

It is believed that a child in its first month has a presentiment or foresight of everything that has to befall it through life. If much given to crying, its future life will be one of sorrow, and *per contra*. Also that if a child's "tooths down-bank" (*i.e.*, has its first teeth in the upper jaw), it won't live long.

Northern Proverbs.

1. There's great (v. rare, brave) doings in the North when they steek (bar) their doors wi' tayleurs.
2. There's great stirring in the North when old wives (? witches) ride scout.
3. Three great evils come out of the North—a cold wind, a cunning knave, and shrinking cloth.

Cope, a' cope, a bargain,
Never cope again:
Two cross sticks
And a broken bane (bone).

The above rhymes (which are headed Legal Oral Contract) are chanted by two children with the little fingers of their right right hands hooked together. The use prevails at Scarborough,

and is evidently a juvenile contract between the parties, that the coping (exchange) of properties which has just taken place shall never be broken by either of them in all future time. It is clearly, I think, of high antiquity.

[Ring tang the Bottle Bell, A' the leers gangs to Hell.]
[Bargain be'd till ye be deed, A hunder' pound if ye rue again.]
Ber. vars.

A Roundhead Rhyme.

Up with the rump,
And down with the stump,
And away with the Presbytereers.

This triplet is sung or said at Driffield in the East Riding of Yorkshire, on the 29th of May; and refers us back to the unhappy era of the first Charles; Oliver Cromwell; the Rump Parliament; the Roundheads and Cavaliers; and the Independents and Presbyterians.

These rhymes I find were used as a political "toasting health" by certain Jacobites. They are noticed in Mr. James Ray's *History of the Rebellion of* '45-6. York, 1749.

Ghosts never appear on Christmas Eve!

* * * *

"Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then they say no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planet strikes,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time."
Marcellus.

"So have I heard and do in part believe it."

* * * *

Horatio.

So says the immortal Shakespeare; and the truth thereof few now-a-days, I hope, will call in question. Grose observes, too, that those born on Christmas Day cannot see spirits; which is another incontrovertible fact. What a happiness this must have been seventy or eighty years ago and upwards, to those chosen few who had the good luck to be born on the eve of this festival of all festivals; when the whole earth was so overrun with ghosts, boggles (1), bloody-bones, spirits, demons, ignis fatui, brownies (2), bugbears, black dogs, spectres, shellycoats, scarecrows, witches, wizards, barguests (3), Robin-Goodfellows (4), hags (5), night-bats, scrags, breaknecks, fantasms, hob-goblins, hobhoulards, boggy-boes, dobbies (6), hob-thrusts (7), fetches (8), kelpies, warlocks, mock-beggars (9), mum-pokers, Jemmy-burties, urchins, satyrs, pans, fauns, sirens, tritons, centaurs, calcars, nymphs, imps, incubusses, spoorns, men-in-the-oak, hell-wains, fire-drakes, kit-a-can-sticks, Tom-tumblers, melch-dicks, larrs, kitty-witches, hobby-lanthorns, Dick-a-

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1. Boggle-house, parish of Sedgefield. Bellingham Boggle-Hole, Northd. [Bogle-houses in Lowick Forest, Northumberland.]

2. There is also a river of this name in the Bishopric of Durham. Also at York is Browney Dike, a portion of the Foss.

3. The York Barguest. See *Memoirs of R. Surtees, Esq.*; new ed., p. 80, 1852.

4. This merry fay acted the part of fool or jester, at the court of Oberon, the fairy monarch.

5. Hag-House. A farmstead near Brancepeth.

6. The Mortham Dobby. A Teesdale goblin.

7. Hob-o-t'-Hursts, *i. e.* spirits of the woods. Hobthrush Rook, Farndale, Yorkshire.

8. The spirit or double of a dying person.

9. Mock-beggar Hall. Of houses, rocks, etc., bearing this name we meet with many instances.

Tuesdays, Elf-fires, Gyl-burnt-tails, knockers, elves (10), raw-heads, Meg-with-the-wads, old-shocks, ouphs, pad-fooits, pixies, pictrees (11), giants, dwafs, Tom-pokers, tutgots, snapdragons, sprets, spunks, conjurers, thurses, spurns, tantarrabobs, swaithes, (12), tints, tod-lowries, Jack-in-the-Wads, mormos, changelings, redcaps, yeth-hounds, colt-pixies, Tom-thumbs, black-bugs, boggarts, scar-bugs, shag-foals, hodge-pochers, hob-thrushes, bugs, bull-beggars, bygorns, bolls, caddies, bomen, brags, wraithes (13), waffs (14), flay-boggarts, fiends, gallytrots, imps, gytrashes, patches, hob-and-lanthorns, gringes, boguests, bonelesses, Peg-powlers (15), pucks, fays, kidnappers, gally-beggars, hudskins, nickers, madcaps, trolls, robinets, friars' lanthorns, silkies (16), cauld-lads (17), death-hearses, goblins (18), hob-headlesses (19), buggaboes, kows (20), or cowes, nickies, nacks, [necks] waiths (21), miffies, buckies, gholes, sylphs, guests, swarths, freiths, freits, gy-carlins [Gyre-carling]

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10. Elf-Hills, parish of Hutton-in-the-Forest, Cumberland. Elf-How, parish of Kendal. Elf-Hills, near Cambo.

11. There is a village of this name near Chester-le-Street; and singular enough a ghost story, called the "Picktree Bragg," is attached to it. See Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, Bohn's ed. p. 310.

12, 13, 14, 21, 23, 27. The same with note 8.

15. This oulde ladye is the evil goddess of the Tees. I also meet with a Nanny Powler, at Darlington, who from the identity of their sirnames, is, I judge, a sister, or it may be a daughter of Peg's. Nanny Powler, aforesaid, haunts the Skerne, a tributary of the Tees.

16. The Heddon Silky, and Silky's Brig, near Heddon. See Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., vol. ii., p. 181.

17. Occasionally, we may hear Cowed, or rather Cowd Lad. The meaning, however, is the same; Cowd being a variation of the more refined word, cold.

18. Goblin Field, near Mold, Flintshire.

19. Hob-Cross-Hill. A place near Doncaster.

20. "The Hedley Kow," a Northumberland ghost story.

pigmies, chittifaces, nixies (22), Jinny-burnt-tails, dudmen, hell-hounds, dopple-gangers (23), boggleboes, bogies, redmen, portunes, grants, hobbits, hobgoblins, brown-men (24), cowies, dunnies (25), wirrikows (26), alholdes, mannikins, follets, korreds, lubberkins, cluricauns, kobolds, leprechauns, kors, mares, korreds, puckles, korigans, sylvans, succubuses, black-men, shadows, banshees, lian-hanshees, clabbernappers, Gabriel-hounds, mawkins, doubles (27), corpse lights or candles, scrats, mahounds, trows, gnomes, sprites, fates, fiends, sybils, nick-nevins (28), whitewomen, fairies (29), thrummy-caps (30),

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22. "Know you the nixies, gay and fair?
Their eyes are black, and green their hair,
They lurk in sedgy waters."
Keightley.

24. See ghost story of the "Brown Man of the Moor." Richardson's *Table Book.*

25. The Hazelrigg Dunny. An excellent Northumberland ghost story.

26. "Frae gudame's mouth auld warld tale they hear,
O' warlocks louping round the wirriknow."

The works of Robt. Fergusson, ed. by A. B. Grossart, Edin., 1851, p. 61.

Mr. Maxwell uses worrikow as the name of a ghost in his *Border Sketches.* From the honour paid to him, according to the above couplet, he appears to have been a sort of master hobgoblin.

28. Mother witches.

29. Fairy Dean, two miles above Melrose. Fairy Stone, near Fourstones, in the parish of Warden, Northumberland. This stone, in which is a secret cavity, has attained a celebrity in history owing to the letters being placed therein, to and from the unfortunate Earl of Derwentwater, during the '15.

30. Thrummy Hills, near Catterick. The name of this sprite is met with in the Fairy tales of Northumberland.

cutties (31), and nisses, and apparitions of every shape, make, form, fashion, kind and description, that there was not a village in England that had not its own peculiar ghost. Nay, every lone tenement, castle, or mansion-house, which could boast of any antiquity had its bogle, its spectre, or its knocker. The churches, churchyards, and cross-roads, were all haunted. Every green lane had its boulder-stone on which an apparition kept watch at night. Every common had its circle of fairies belonging to it. And there was scarcely a shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit! [See *Lit. Gaz.* for December, 1848, p. 849.]

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31. These are a certain class of female Boggles, not altogether peculiar to Scotland, who wore their lower robes, at least, *a-la-bloomer*. They are named by Burns, in his inimitable poem Tam-o'-Shanter. Mr. Halliwell gives the word as localized in Somersetshire.

IX.

A FEW POPULAR RHYMES, PROVERBS, AND SAYINGS RELATING TO FAIRIES, WITCHES, AND GIPSIES.

"Fairies, black, grey, green and white."
Shakespeare.

Where the scythe cuts and the sock rives,
No more fairies and bee-bikes.

Vervain and dill,
Hinder[s] witches from their will.
Aubrey's Miscellanies, p. 147.

If your whipsticks made of rowan,
You may ride your nag thro' ony town.

Much about a pitch,
Quoth the devil to the witch.

Much about much, as the deil said to the witch.—Scots version.

A hairy man's a geary man;
But a hairy wife's a witch.

Woe to the lad,
Without a rowan tree gad.

Some readings give "With a," etc.

A witch-wife and an evil,
Is three halfpence worse than the deevil.

Hey-how for Hallow-e'en,
When all the witches are to be seen,
Some in black and some in green,
Hey-how for Hallow e'en.

Thout! tout!! a tout tout!!!
Throughout and about.

The cry of the Somersetshire witches, when on their aerial travels by night.* "

Cummer goe ye before, cummer goe ye,
Gif ye will not goe before, cummer let me.†

The above verses are said to have been the words of a song sung at North Berwick, in Lothian, accompanied by the music of a Jew's harp or trump, which was played by Geilles Duncan, a servant-girl, before two hundred witches, who joined hands in a short daunce or reel, singing these lines all the while with one voice.

Witchy, witchy, I defy thee!
Four fingers round my thumb,
Let me go quietly by thee!!

The anti-witch rhyme used in Teesdale some sixty or seventy years ago.

Black-luggie, lammer-bead,
Rowan tree, and reed thread,
Put the witches to their speed.

The meaning of black-luggie, I know not. [A small wooden vessel made of staves, one of which projects as a handle.]

* This is a sort of freebooting cry.
† Cummer. A gossip, a young girl.

Lammer-bead—a coruption of amber-bead. Such beads are still worn by a few old people in Scotland, as a preservation against a variety of diseases, especially asthma, dropsy, and tooth-ache. They also preserve the wearer from the effects of witchcraft, as stated in the text. I have seen a twig of rowan-tree, witchwood, quickbane [*i.e.* quickbeam from cwic, alive and beam a tree], wild-ash, witchbane, royne-tree, mountain ash, wicken-tree, wicky, wiggy, witchen, whitty, royan, roun or ran-tree; also called wiggan, witty, wiggin, witch-hazel, roden, quicken, or roan-tree,* which had been gathered on the 2nd of May [observe this], wound round with some dozens of yards of reed threed, *i.e.*, red threed, placed visibly in the window, to act as a charm in keeping witches and boggleboes from the house. So also we have:—

Rowan ash and reed threed
Keep the devils fra' their speed.

Ye brade o' witches, ye can do no good to yourself.

Fair they come, fair they go, and always their heels behind them.

Neither so sinful as to sink, nor so godly as to swim.

Falser than Waghorn (Wagner), and he was nineteen times falser than the devil.

Ingratitude is worse than witchcraft.

Ye're as mitch as half a witch.

To milk the tether (*i.e.*, the cow-tie).

To carry off the milk from any one's cow, by milking a hair-tether. A piece of superstition once prevalent in Scotland—(equally well known in the North of England).

Go in God's name, so you ride no witches.

Rynt (arroint) you, witch, quoth Bess Lockit to her mother.

* To this list may be added Hicken.

They that burn you for a witch lose all their coals.

Never talk of witches on a Friday.

Ye're ower aude ffarrand to be fraid o' witches.

Witches are most apt to confess on a Friday.

Friday is the witches' Sabbath.

To hug one, as the devil hugs a witch.

Laughs like a pixy (*i.e.* fairy).

Laughing like pixies.—Devonshire proverb, *Athenæum*, 1846, p. 1092.

As black (*) as
As cross as
As ugly as
As sinful as
} a witch.

Four fingers and a thumb, witch, I defy thee!

Waters locked! Waters locked!!

A favourite cry of fairies.

Borram! Borram!! Borram!!!

The cry of the Irish fairies, after mounting their steeds, parallel with the Scottish cry,—

Horse! Horse!! and Hattock!!! †

Ye're like a witch, ye say your prayers backward.

So many gipsies so many smiths.

The gipsies are all akin.

To live in the land of the Fair family.

A Welsh fairy saying.

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* Witches were of two kinds, black and white. The former were looked upon as the most dangerous and devilish.

† This cry and the one immediately preceding are also of the reiving or frebooting class.

God grant that the sweet* fairies may put money in your shoes and sweep your house clean.

One of the good wishes of the olden time.

He who finds a piece of money will always find another in the same place, as long as he keeps it a secret.

Fairies comb goats' beards every Friday.

Its going on like Stokepitch's can.

A pixy saying, used in Devonshire. The family of Stokespitch or Sukespic, resided near Topsham; and a barrel of ale in their cellar had for many years continued to run freely without being exhausted. It was considered a valuable heirloom, and was valued accordingly, until a curious maid servant took out the bung to ascertain the cause of this extraordinary power. On looking into the cask she found it full of cobwebs; but the Pixies, it would appear, were offended, for on turning the cock, as usual, the ale had ceased to flow!

The common reply at Topsham to the inquiry how any affair went on was, "Its going on," &c., *i.e.*, it was proceeding prosperously.

You're half a witch, *i.e.*, very cunning.

To laugh like Robin Goodfellow. †

Buzz! Buzz-!! Buzz !!!

In the middle of the sixteenth century if a person waved his hat or bonnet in the air and cried Buzz! three times, under the belief that by this act he would take away the life of another,

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* Sweet, qy. swairt, dark, tawny, swarthy.

† This merry fay acted the part of fool or jester in the court of Oberon, the Fairy King. And if we may believe Gervase of Tilbury, Robin was the offspring of a proper young wench by a hec-fayrie, a king or something of that kind among them.

the old law and lawmakers considered the person so saying and acting to be worthy of death, he being a murderer in intent and having dealings with witches.

I wish I was a far from God as my nails are from dirt.

A witches prayer whilst she was in the act of cleaning her nails.

All my losses and crosses go alongst the door.

Wednesday is the fairies' sabbath or holiday.

She's like a witch, scratch till the blood come, and she cannot hurt you.

A witch is afraid of her own blood.

A Pendle Forest witch.

A Lancashire witch.

A witch cannot greet, *i.e.*, weep.

One of the Faw gang.

Worse than the Faw gang.

The Faws are a species of gipsies. It is supposed that they acquired this appellation from Johnnie Faw, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, with whom James IV. and Queen Mary saw not only the propriety, but also necessity, of entering into special treaty.

Francis Heron, King of the Faws, bur. [Jarrow] 13 January 1756.—Sharp's *Chron. Mir.*

To laugh like old Bogie.

He caps Bogie.

Amplified to—

He caps Bogie, bogie capt Redcap, and Redcap capt Old Nick.

To be hag [or witch] ridden.

See Telfer's *Tales and Ballads.* "Witches of Birtley; a

Northumberland Tradition." London. 1852.—Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 332. London. 1850.

Nightmare. A spirit or hag of the night.

To play the Puck.

An Irish saying parallel with the English. To play the deuce or devil.—Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*.

Has got into Lob's pound [or pond].

That is into the fairy pinfold. *Ibid.*

Pinch like a fairy.

"Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins."—*Merry Wives of Windsor*.

He's got Piggwiggan, vulgo Peggy Wiggan.

A severe fall or somerset is so termed in the Bishopric. The fairy Pigwiggan is celebrated by Drayton in his *Nymphidia*.

To be fairy struck.

The paralysis is, or rather perhaps was, so called.—*Fairy Mythology*.

There never has been a merry world since the Phynodderee lost his ground.

A Manx fairy saying. See Train's *Isle of Man*, ii. p. 148; *Popular Rhymes, etc., of the Isle of Man*, pp. 16-17.

To be pixey led.

"When a man has got a wee drap ower muckle whusky, misses his way home, and gets miles out of his direct course, he tells a tale of excuse, and whiles lays the blame on the innocent pixies."—See *Fairy Mythology*, p. 300.

The fairies lanthorn.

That is the glowworm.

God speed you, gentlemen.

When an Irish peasant sees a cloud of dust sweeping along the road, he raises his hat and breathes forth the above blessing in behoof of the company of invisible fairies whom he believes to have caused it.—*Ibid.*, pp. 363-4.

The Phooka have dirtied the blackberries.

Ibid. Said when the fruit of the bramble is spoilt through age at the end of the season. In the North of England we say, The Devil has set his foot on the bumblekites.

Fairy, fairy, bake me a bannock and roast me a collop,
And I'll give ye a spurtle aff my gad end.

Spoken three times by the Clydesdale peasant when ploughing, under the impression that on his getting to the end of the fourth furrow those good things will be spread forth on the grass.—Chambers' *Popular Rhymes, Scotland*, 3rd ed., p. 106.

Turn your clokes (coats)
For fairy folkes
Are in old okes.

["Now the pixeys work is done,
We take our clothes and off we run."
Devonshire, *Athenæum*, 1846, p. 1092.]

I well remember that on more occasions than one, when a schoolboy, I have turned and worn my coat inside out in passing through a wood in order to avoid the good people. On "Nutting Days"—those glorious red-letter days in the schoolboy's calendar—the use pretty generally prevailed. The rhymes in the text are the English formula.—See *Keightley*, p. 291-300.

[Children in Scotland blacken marbles, which they then call witches, imagining that these are not so readily struck when played at. They also invoke the witch when their playfellow aims his marble, by spitting between him and the mark saying,

" Black witch before your nose,
Paddy (Paddock) pit ye oot."]

X.

PROVERBIAL RHYMES AND SAYINGS FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR.

Christmas.

"A merry Christmas, a happy New Year, and a jovial Handsel Monday."

A black Christmas makes a fat churchyard.

If the ice will bear a goose before Christmas, it will not bear a duck afterwards.

The twelve days of Christmas.

As dark as a Yule midnight.

Every day's no Yule day—cast the cat a castock.

That is a cabbage stalk, and the proverb means much the same thing as "Spare no expense, bring another bottle of small beer!"

Yule! Yule! a pack of new cards and a Christmas fule.

Some readings give stule, *i.e.* stool, in place of "fule." Aubrey says it was sung in the West Riding of Yorkshire when the Yule log was brought in.

A green Yule makes a fat kirk-yard.

Big as a Christmas pig!

It's good to cry Yule at another man's cost.

As many mince pies as you taste at Christmas, so many happy months you will have.

A trite observation, general through the whole of Westmoreland and Cumberland, counties celebrated for their extreme hospitality. There is an ancient custom at Piddle-Hinton, Dorsetshire, for the rector to give away on old Christmas day, annually, a pound of bread, a pint of ale, and a mince pie, to every poor person in the parish. This distribution is regularly made by the rector to upwards of three hundred persons.—*Charity Commissioners' Report*, vol. xxix. p. 108.

A windy Christmas is a sign of a good year.

As bare as a birch at Yule even.

In allusion to the Christmas log. It is spoken of one in extreme poverty. [This does not concern the Christmas log. Birches are denuded of their foliage long before Christmas, hence Laidlaw's fine lines:

> "'Twas when the wan leaf frae the birk tree was fa'in,
> And Martinmas dowie had wound up the year."

A birch-wood in winter, with its multiplicity of dark twigs, is extremely bare.]

A Yule feast may be quit at Pasche,

i.e., a Christmas feast may be paid again at Easter, or, "one good turn deserves another."

Christmas comes but once a year.

Ghosts never appear on Christmas eve.

Shakespeare attests to the truthfulness of this old saw.

Busy as an English oven at Christmas.

Cold as Christmas.

A kiss at Christmas and an egg at Easter.

They talk of Christmas so long that it comes.

Yule is good on Yule even.

After a Christmas comes a Lent.

In other words, "After a feast comes a famine."

A jolly wassail bowl.
A winter council, a careful Christmas, and a bloody Lent.
Nixon's *Cheshire Proph.*

I'll bring your Yule belt to the Beltane bore.
Scots.

A light Christmas, a heavy sheaf.

She simpers like a frummetty kettle at Christmas.

One of the dark days before Christmas.

Now's now, but Yule's in winter.

The year lasts longer than Yule.

The day of St. Thomas, the blessed divine,
Is good for brewing, baking, and killing fat swine.

The 21st December. This too is the shortest day, and the commencement of the winter quarter. It is likewise the first day of the festival of all festivals—Christmas—which anciently continued without intermission from this day to the second of February, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary; but Christmas day and the twelve days succeeding were considered the most sacred to mirth and hospitality; hence the proverbial phrase, "The twelve days of Christmas." A custom, I believe, still exists in some parts of England of ringing a merry peal upon the bells of the parish steeple on this day. It is called "Ringing in Christmas." While speaking of bell-ringing at this festival, I may as well here observe that a practice of considerable antiquity still exists at Dewsbury,

Yorkshire, which consists in ringing the great bell of the church at midnight on Christmas eve. This knell is called the Devil's Passing Bell. The bell is tolled in the manner of a funeral or passing bell. The moral of it is that the devil died when Christ was born. This use was discontinued for many years, but was revived by the vicar in 1828.—*Collect. Topograph.*, vol. i. p. 167. The Rev. Ant. Sterry, vicar of Lidney, gave by deed, in the fortieth of Queen Elizabeth, the sum of five shillings per annum, payable out of an estate called the Clasp in this parish (Ruardean, Gloucestershire), for ringing a peal on Christmas eve, about midnight, for two hours, in commemoration of the Nativity. The money is still received and applied as directed.—*Char. Com. Rep.*, vol. xix. p. 105.

St. Thomas's day is past and gone,
And Christmas is most acome.
Maidens arise,
And bake your pies,
An save poor tailor Bobby some.

Halliwell's *Nursery Rhymes*, 4th ed., p. 220.

Bouncer, Buckler, velvet's dear,
And Christmas comes but once a year,
Though when it comes it brings good cheer,
So farewell Christmas once a year.

Varia:

Bounce, Buckram, velvet's dear,
Christmas comes but once a year,
And when it comes it brings good cheer,
But when it's gone it's never the near.

See note on these rhymes, Halliwell's *Rhymes*, 4th ed., p. 44.

He's a fule that marries at Yule,
For when the bairn's to bear
The corn's to shear.

A meet companion for the following :—

He who marries between the syckle and the scythe, will never thrive.

Perhaps the latter proverb was more strictly true when our forefathers devoted a whole month in which to celebrate their nuptials, to the entire neglect of all other matters. The former still holds good with agricultural labourers at the present moment.

Make we mirth for Christ's birth,
And sing we Yule till Candlemas.

It's good crying Yule !
On another man's stool.

If Christmas day on a Monday fall,
A troublous winter we shall have all.

Yule ! Yule ! Yule ! Yule !
Three puddings in a pule (pool),
Crack nuts and cry Yule !

This was, some fifty years ago, a common cry in the counties of York and Durham, on the night of Christmas day; but what the three puddings in a pule are intended to typify I have never been able to discover, unless it be three plum puddings on a ponderous pewter dish, floating, as it were, in a pule of sweetened rum sauce! The command to crack nuts may be inferred from the following extract from a Christmas carol, given at the end of old George Withers' "Juvenilia" :—

Hark how the wagges abrode doe call
Each other foorth to rambling;
Anon, you'l see them in the hall,
For nuts and apples scambling.

The cry of "Yule, Yule, Yule!" used anciently to be made

in our northern churches after service on Christmas day, the people at the same time dancing to the words.—See *Glossographia*, ed. 1681, p. 692.

Hogmanay, trollolay;
Give us some of your white bread,
But none of your grey.

Hagmena, Hagmena;
Give us bread and cheese,
And let us away.

This and the preceding partake more of the quality of cries or chansons than proverbs. They were sung or said by children on the last day of the year, when collecting their farls, as they named it, of oaten cake and cheese.—See *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. lx. p. 499.

Blessed be St. Steven,
There's no fasting on his even.

The eve of this day is Christmas day, and the rhymes are happily expressive of the good eating and great doings at this festive season.

Oh! dirty December:
But Christmas remember!

Yule is young on Yule even,
And old on St. Steven.

When Yule comes, dule comes,
Could feet and legs;
When Pasche comes, grace comes,
Butter, milk, and eggs.
Chambers's Popular Rhymes, Scotland.

At Christmas play, and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year.

Martinmas is past and gone,
Christmas in drawing near,
There's no a piece mutton in a' the house
To serve out for Christmas cheer.
Wooler, Northumberland.

Between Martinmas and Yule,
Water's worth wine in any pule.

Yule is come, and Yule is gone,
And we have feasted weel;
So Jack must to his flail again,
And Jenny to her wheel.

The following stanzas are the only now remaining fragments of the Hagmena Song, as sung by the *pinder* of the borough of Richmond, in com. Ebor:—

To-night it is the New Year's eve, to-morrow is the day,
And we are come for our right, and for our ray,
As we used to do in Old King Henry's day.
Sing, fellows, sing! Hagman heigh!

If you go to the bacon-flick, cut me a good bit;
Cut, cut, and high, beware of your bræ;
Cut, cut, and low, beware of your maw;
Cut, cut, and round, beware of your thoom,—
That me and my merry men may (have some).*
Sing, fellows, sing! Hagman heigh!

If you go to the black-ark,† bring me out x mark,
Ten mark, x pound, throw it down upon the ground,
That me and my merry men may (have some)—
Sing, fellows, sing! Hagman heigh!

* These two words are omitted in the copy taken down from the recitation of old master Craven, the *pinder* of the borough.

† The black ark was a ponderous piece of oaken furniture about six

The dish-clout hangs upon a pin,
Rise maids and let us in:
Be she maid or be she nane,
If she comes she must be ta'en.*
Sing, fellows, sing! Hagman heigh!

*** Permit me to suggest the following additional stanza to the notice of the jolly old Pinder of Richmond, should he be spared to sing this song at the commencement of another year. I fancy it would chime in tolerably after verse two:—

Then gang to your aumbrie if you please,
And fetch us here some bread and cheese;
Next bring us out an old whetstane,
And we'll sharpen our whittles every ane,
That me and my merry men may have some.
Sing, fellows, sing! Hagman heigh!

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feet in length and three in depth; the inside was usually divided into two parts. Occasionally they had false bottoms. These kists are often to be met with in the dwellings of ancient housekeepers beautifully carved, bearing the initials of the first owner and the date of the construction. Their original use was that of holding linen, clothes, and various other items of still higher value, as implied in the text. They are now generally devoted to the purpose of holding flour and bread meal. In Westmoreland they are often used as repositories for *haver cakes*.

There is an old proverb which says, "The muck-midden is the mother of the meal-ark;" and it is one, too, which altereth not with time.

In the will of Bernard Gilpin, 1582, the testator leaves to the "poore of Houghton p'ishe, the greater new ark for corne, standin in the hall to p'vide them grotes in winter."

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* Evidently a spurious verse, and belonging to another song, or rather erased. *See* my reply to Steddy, letter first, pp. 1, 2.

"Merry men," anciently written "merrie men," is a term of frequent occurrence in the early songs and ballads of the North; its meaning as here used is true, faithful, &c. The word is applied characteristically to Wakefield and Carlisle. On the word "ray," used in the first verse, I may observe that it evidently alludes to a sort of cloth woven in party-coloured stripes. The richer clothes of this kind had streaks of gold and silver.

> And everych of them a good mantell
> Of scarlet and of raye.—*Robin Hood.*

See an ancient specimen of the Hagmena Song in Mr. Wright's *Songs and Carols of the Fifteenth Century.* Printed for the Percy Society, Oct. 1847, p. 63.

> Yf Christmas day on the Saterday falle,
> That winter ys to be dredden alle;
> Hyt shalbe so full of grete tempeste,
> That hyt shall sle bothe man and beste;
> Frute and corne shall fayle grete won,
> And olden folkes dyen many on.
> Whate woman that day of chylde travayle,
> They shalbe borne in grete perelle;
> And chyldren that be born that day,
> Within halfe a yere they shall dye, par fay.
> The somer than shall wete ryghte ylle,
> Yf thou awghte stele, hyt shal the spylle;
> Tho dyest yf sekenes take the.

The seventh and last stanza of a Christmas song of the fifteenth century. [Excerpit from MS. *Harl.*, No. 2252, fol. 154 r.]

NEW YEAR'S TIDE.

A happy New Year and a merry (or jovial) Handsel Monday. Handsel Monday is the first Monday in the New Year.

> Praise we the Lord that hath no peer,
> And thank we him for this New Year.

If New Year's eve night wind blow south,
If betokeneth warmth and growth:
If west, much milk and fish in the sea;
If north, much cold and storms there will be;
If east, the trees will bear much fruit;
If north-east, flee it man and brute.

In Sir John Sinclair's *Stat. Acct. of Scotland,* Edin., 1794, 8vo. vol. xii. p. 458, the minister of Kirkmichael, in county Banff, under the head of "Superstitions," etc., communicates: On the first night in January they observe with anxious attention the disposition of the atmosphere. Their faith in these signs is couched in verses which may be thus translated:

The wind of the south will be productive of heat and fertility.
The wind of the west of milk and fish.
The wind of the north of cold and storm.
The wind from the east of fruit on the trees.

The Highlanders on New Year's day burn juniper before their cattle.

At New Year's tide,
The days lengthen a cock's stride.

This saying is intended to express the lengthening of the days in a small but perceptible degree. The countryman well knows the truth of what he says from observing where the shadow of the upper lintel of the door falls at twelve o'clock, and there making a mark. At New Year's day, the sun at the meridian being higher, its shadow comes nearer the door by four or five inches, which, for rhyme's sake, is called "a cock's stride," and so expresses the sensible increase of the day.—*Gent. Mag.*, 1759.

XI.

A FEW RHYMES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR AND DAYS OF THE WEEK.

Memorial Lines on the Months.

1. Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November,
February hath twenty-eight alone,
And all the rest have thirty-and-one,
Unless that leap year doth combine,
And give to February twenty-nine.

Young Man's Companion, 1703

2. Thirty days hath fruit-bearing September,
Moist April, hot June, and cold November,
Short February twenty-eight alone;
The other months have either thirty-one;
And February, when the fourth year's run,
Does gain a day from the swift-moving sun.

Shepherd's Kalendar; or Countryman's Daily Companion.

3. Thirtie days hath September,
April, June, and November;
The rest have thirtie-and-one,
Save February alone,
Which monthe hath but eight-and-twenty meere;
Save when it is bissextile, or leap yeare.

Concordancy of Yeares, A. Hopton, 1615, p. 60.

4. Thirty dayes hath November,
April, June, and September;
February hath XXVIII alone,
And all the rest have XXXI.
Grafton's *Chronicle*, 1570, 8vo.

5. Thirty dayes hath November,
April, June, and September,
Twenty-and-eight hath February alone,
And all the rest thirty-and-one,
But in the leape you must add one.
Harrison's *Dis. Brit.*, p. 119.

MEMORIAL LINES USED BY THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

6 Days twenty-eight in second month appear,
And one day more is added each leap year:
The fourth, eleventh, ninth, and sixth months run
To thirty days,—the rest to thirty-one.

PARTIAL VARIATIONS.

7. Except in leap year, at which time,
February's days are twenty-nine.

8. But leap year cometh once in four,
And gives to February one day more.

9. Except in February alone,
In which do twenty-eight appear,
And twenty-nine in each leap year.

To find leap year you have this rule :—

Divide by iv, what's left shall be,
For leap year 0, for past i, ii, and iii.
Harris.

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A Rhyme whereby to remember on what Day of the Week each Month falleth.

April loveth to link with July,	Sunday.
And the merry New Year with October comes by,	Monday.
August for Wednesday, Tuesday for May,	Tuesday and Wednesday.
March and November and Valentine's Day	Thursday.
Friday is June day, and last we seek,	Friday.
September and Christmas to finish the week.	Saturday.

Rhymes on the Days of Birth.

Born on a Monday, fair of face:
Born on a Tuesday, full of grace:
Born on a Wednesday, merry and glad:
Born on a Thursday, sour and sad:
Born on a Friday, godly given:
Born on a Saturday, work for your living:
Born on a Sunday, never shall want,
And here ends the week, and there's an end on't.

Rhymes on Wedding Days.

Monday for wealth,
Tuesday for health,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for crosses,
Friday for losses,
And Saturday no luck at all.

Rhymes on the Days of the Week.

Saturday is Sunday's brother,
Monday is no other:
Tuesday is the market day,
Wednesday carries the week away:
Thursday I won't spin,
And on Friday I'll never begin.

XII.

CHARMS.

A Revelation, or Charact.

In the *Athenian Oracle* a charm is defined to be "a form of words or letters, repeated or written, whereby strange things are pretended to be done, beyond the ordinary power of nature." —Vol. ii. p. 424.

"If there be any good or use unto the health in spels, they have that prerogative by accident, and by the power and vertue of fancie. If fancie then be the foundation whereupon buildeth the good of spels, spels must needs be as fancies are, uncertaine and vaine; so must also, by consequent, be their use, and helpe, and no lesse all they that trust unto them."—Cotta, *Short Discoverie of the Unobserved Dangers of severall sorts of Ignorant and Unconsiderate Practisers of Physicke in England.* 4to. London, 1612, p. 50.

The sale of charms was, a century or two ago, a not uncommon thing in England; it has now, happily, however, wholly fallen into desuetude, with the exception of the lower classes of our brethren from the sister isle. The wholesale usage is still prevalent through the states of his Holiness the Pope; also in Spain, in Portugal, and in Ireland; in all which countries, be it observed, the religion of the Romish Church exists in its most debased and intolerant forms. In the city of Leon (Spain) "printed charms and incantations against Satan and his host, and against every kind of misfortune, are publicly sold in the shops

and are in great demand. Such are the results of popery."—Borrow's *Bible in Spain*. The same author says that he met with charms of this class not only on the persons of the lower classes, but he gives a translation of one which he borrowed from one of the upper grades, who boasted that in it were contained every hope of earthly safety.—*Bible in Spain*, cap. iii. The following Anglo-Irish specimen of one of these religious tracts in *manu scripta* is copied *verb. et lit.* for the edification of the curious in charms, incantations, revelations, spells, and such like items of the vulgar creed.

A Charm.

"For ye Blessing of Godd and His Son Jhesu Christ.

"A true coppy of y^{s} Leter writen by God own hand and it was found in a valey named Macconaby near to ye town of Jesundry in ye valey named Macconaby in ye year of our Lord MDCLXIX. this Letter was written by the command of Jesus CriSt which was found under a great Red Stone Large it was and not far from y^{e} afors'd Town of Jesundry in ye valey named Macconaby which was found in a morning and Engraven [with] theas words following Blessed are thay that Turneth me over y^{e} people that Saw y^{e} Stone writen and Engraven did endevour to torn It over but thear Labour was in Vain, so that thay could Not by any Means move it and when thay could not prevaill thay prayed Ernestly deSiring God That thay might and of that Same writing and thear came a Litle Child betwixt S'x and Seven years of age which ye Same Stone it turned over and without any world by [qy. worldly] help to y^{e} Great admaration of ye Beholders the Stone be [qy. being] turned over ther was found a Leter writen whith Golden Leters by the very hand of JeSus ChriSt which this Leter was carried to Jesundry to be red in the Town be longing to y^{e} Lady

Pencelbeo in dideriell (sic) itt was written by ye command of JeSus ChriStt An Sent by an angell in ye year of Our Lord MDCIII. which commandment was as foloweth firSt you Shall Love one another Secondly thay that Worket home [on] ye Sobboth shall be excommunicate [in the original this word is partially defaced] Command that you go to Church and keep that Day holy fourthly with Labour and Endevour and EarneStly desire me to forgive all your Sins my commandments you Shall faithfully and zealously keep fifthly you Shall faithfully believe that it was writin with my own hands you shall go to the Church and your Children and your Servants with you thear and obServe my words you Shall Chasten and correck your Children tach [teach] them to keepe my commandments you Shal Live with brotherlye Love you Shal Leave work one [on] Setterday at nighte at five o'clock In ye Evening and So continu untell munday at morning you Shall fast five days in y^e^ ememrance [remembrance] of the five wounds I Received for you you Shalle not tack Nether Gold nor Silver wrongfully nether sorning [scorning] my words nor my doings and I will give mannyfold blesings and Long Life unto your Cattle and your Land shall be repleniched with fruitfully To bring forth abundanse of all Sorts of fruite and Blessings Shall come upon you and I will comfort you but thay that do contrary Shall Cursed be and not blesed and thear Cattell Shall be cursed and unfruitefull I will send upon yow Lightenings and Thunderboults and want of Good Things I will send upon you that be witneSs againSt this my writing and beliveing that it was not writen with my own hand Spoken with my mouth and they whear with given to the poor and will not Shall be cursed and not blessed of me in ye Conclution of theas Remember That you keep holy ye Sabboth day without any Provaning of ye Same knoweth I have given you Sex days to Labour one [on] ye

Seventh my Self ReSted if any write a coppy of this Letter and keep it without teaching of others shall be Cursed and not blesed and whoSoever writ a coppy of this Letter with his own hand [and] Causeth it to be red and Publiched he Shall [be] Blesed of me and if he Sinned of then [qy. often] as thare is Stars in ye Sky his Sins shall be forgiven him again If you do not believe theas but go again my Commandments I send unto him wormes which will d'Sstroy you and your children and your Goods or what So ever you hath more over if any writ a copy of this Leter and keep it within his hous no Evil Spiret shall hantt him If any woman be big with child if She hath a coppy of this Leter abought [her] Shea Shall be delevered of her burthen you Shall hear no more of me untell ye day of Judgement all good nes and gladneS Shall come whear a coppy of this Letter is kept.

"Laus Deo
"In nomina patris et filius et spiritus sanctus.
"Amen."

Waldron in his description of the Isle of Man names a Charact or Charect of very similar talismanic properties the original of which Manxmen assert to have been found under a Cross in the Island which he had frequently seen.

XIII.

RHYMES AND PROVERBS RELATING TO HAWKING AND THE CHASE.

All are not hunters that blow the horn.

"It is not the value of the fox, but the pleasure of the chase that makes men foxhunters."

> "Better to hunt the fields for health unbought,
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught."
>
> —*Dryden.*

Chapter I.

Foxes never fare better than when they are cursed.
Foxes dig not their own holes.
He who would have a hare for breakfast must hunt overnight.
As cunning as a klyket (fox).
Foxes prey furthest from their earths.
Does not know a fox from a fern bush.
[It's either the tod or the fern-buss.—Ber.]
The fox the finder.
He that will {deceive / catch} the fox must arise betimes.
The fox knows much, but more he that catches him.
Every fox must pay his own skin to the flayer.
As long runs the fox as his feet.
The fox will not leave a lamb to dine on a carrion-crow.
Does not know a hawk from a heronsew.
Hawks don't {poke / *varia*, pike} out hawk's e'en.
The gentle hawk mans herself.

To fly at all game.
Hold fast is the first point in hawking.
Empty hands lure no hawks.
High flying hawks are good for princes.
Between hawk and buzzard.—Ray.
He's a hawk of the right nest.
A goss-hawk strikes not at a bunting.
He's a good dog can catch all.
You can have nothing of the cat but her skin.*
The hare starts when least expected.
The foremost (*varia*, hindmost) dog catches the hare.
The more you hunt, the more hares you have.†
Dogs that put up many hares kill none.
If you run two hares you will catch neither.
He runs with the hounds and holds with the hare.
Little dogs start the hare but great ones catch it (*i.e.* eat it).
To fright the hare is not the way to catch her.
Where we least think there goeth the hare away.
We dogs worried the hare.
Find a hare without a meuse (a hiding place).
A houndless man comes to the best hunting.
Many hounds may soon worry one hare.
We hounds slew the hare! quoth the Messett.
A cripple on a cow may catch a hare.
Varia 1. A cripple may catch a hare.
2. A cow may catch a hare.
Perseverance kills the game.
A calf's head will feed a huntsman and his hounds.
Dog won't eat dog.
If you had not aimed at the partridge you had not missed the snipe.

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* There is a tradition in Wales that there was once a people inhabiting Britain who, destitute of dogs, trained foxes and wild cats for the chase.—J. H.

† Explained by when one is killed another comes and takes her lair.

War, hunting, and law, are as full of troubles as pleasures.
A buck of the first head.
To take heart of grace (? hart of grease).
The stag when near spent always returns home.
Those who hunt are above the necessity of labour.
To hunt a hare with an ox.—Plutarch.

Chapter II.

If you be hurt with hart it brings thee to thy bier,
But barber's hand will boar hurt heal, therefore you need not fear.

Dog-draw, stable-stand,
Back-bear, bloody-hand.

The above rhymes imply that the king's forester had power to arrest a man whom he suspected of having been hunting in any of the royal forests under any of the above circumstances.

He that will the chase find,
Let him try up the water and down the wind.

Hunting, hawking, and paramours,
For one joy a hundred displeasures.

XIV.

A FEW FRAGMENTS OF FAIRY FOLKLORE.

"The naturalists of the dark ages owed many obligations to our fairies, for whatever they found wonderful and could not account for, they easily got rid of by charging it to their account."—Brand's *Pop. Ant.* (Charles Knight & Co.), vol. 2, p. 285, note 15.

"My grandmother has often told me of fairies dancing upon our green, and that they were little creatures clothed in green."—*Round about our Coal Fire*, p. 42.

"But now can no man see non elves mo."
Chaucer.

The not yet wholly exploded belief in fairies, fays, and elves, still closely connects itself with—

1. Fairy Slippers.
2. Fairy Stones.
3. Fairy Butter.
4. Fairy Pipes.
5. Fairy Cups.
6. Fairy Caldrons.
7. Fairy Wells.
8. Fairy Hills.
9. Fairy Rings.
10. Fairy Money.
11. Elf Locks.
12. Elf Shots.
13. Fairy Cakes.
14. Fairy Javelins.
15. Fairy Kettles.
16. Fairy Loaves.
17. Fairy Mushrooms.
18. Elf Arrows.
19. Puck Fists.
20. Fairy Flax.
21. Fairy Bells.
22. Fairy Fingers.

23. Fairy Heads, or Colpixy Heads
24. Elf Fire.
25. Elf Knots.
26. Fairy Saddles.
27. Fairy Sparks, or Shell Fire.
28. Fairy Stools.
29. Fairy Mills.
30. Fairy Kidneys.
31. Fairy Knowes, or Hills.
32. Fairy Bourns.
33. Fairy Kirks.
34. Fairy Horns.
35. Fairy Rings, or Pixy Rings. Also called Fairy Circles, or Fairy Dances.
36. Fairy Lint.
37. Fairy Treasure.
38. Fairy Darts.
39. Fairy Faces.
40. Fairy Groats.
41. Pixy Puffs.
42. Pixy Seats.
43. Pixy Stools.
44. Fairy Nips.
45. Elf Kirks.
46. Fairy Caves, Fairy Coves, Fairy Holes, Fairy Parlours.
47. Pixey's Grindstones.
48. Puck Needles.
49. Robin Goodfellow's House.
50. Elf's Glove.
51. Fairy Sickness.
52. Fairy Lanthorn.
53. Fairy Pools.
54. Elf-bore.
55. Fairy Hammers.
56. Fairy Rades.
57. Fairy Music.
58. Fairy-struck.
69. Fairy Sabbath.
60. Fairy Child.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

1. . . . . .

2. Encrinites and the entrochi.

3. Tremella mesenterica. A substance occasionally found after rain on rotten wood or fallen timber; in consistency and colour it is much like genuine butter. It is a yellow gelatinous matter, supposed by the country people to fall from the clouds. Hence its second popular name of star-jelly.

4. Small smoking pipes of an ancient and clumsy form continuously met with in gardens and tillage fields in the north of England.

They are also met with in Scotland, where they are called Pech pipes, and in Ireland, in the immediate localities of Danish forts, where they are called Dane pipes.

5. The Luck of Eden Hall is a cup of this genus. This name is also given to small stones perforated by friction, and believed to be the workmanship of Elves.

6. See an account of a fairy's caldron in Aubrey's *Nat. Hist. and Ant. of the co. Surrey*, iii. 396. This vessel is of extraordinary size, and hammered out of a single piece of copper.

7. The well near Eden Hall, Cumberland, from the brink of which the cup was snatched by the butler, is of this class of springs.

8. I have been informed by an old native of Bishopton, co. Durham, that the singular hill existing there was in his days of childhood called the Fairy Hill.

9. These rings are in accordance with popular local mythology, caused during the festive meetings of the Merrie Fayes when daunçing by monelight, to ye musique of "Robin Goodfellowe's pipes."

> You demi-puppets, that
> By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
> Whereof the ewe not bites; and you whose pastime
> Is to make mid-night mushrooms.
>
> Prospero, *The Tempest.*

10. Found treasure. Shakespeare notices this olden superstition. "This is fairy-gold, boy, and 'twill prove so. We are lucky, boy, and to be so still requires nothing but secrecy."—*Winter's Tale.* *See* also Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*, act iv. sc. 1.

11. "His haires are curl'd and full of Elves-locks, and nitty for want of kembing."—*Wit's Miserie, or, The Divels Incarnat of this Age.* By Thomas Lodge. 4to. Lond., 1596, p. 62. Another old author describes it as "a hard matted or clatted lock of hair in the neck."

12. The heads of ancient arrows or spears. They occur in abundance in some parts of Scotland. They are formed of flint, about an inch long and half an inch broad. Vallency says the peasants in Ireland wear them about their necks set in silver, as an amulet against being elf-shot.

There is also a disease in horned cattle known by this name, which consists in an over-distension of the first stomach from the swelling of clover and grass when eaten with the morning dew upon it. The complaint is popularly believed to be produced by the stroke of an elf-shot or arrow.

13. A disease consisting of a hardness of the side in ages of superstition was so called.

14. Local mythology says that a fairy javelin was in the old times preserved at Midridge Hall, in the county of Durham.

15. The same as number 6.

16. Fossil echini. Also known as fairy-faces.

17. A species of agaric. The same with fairy-stools.

18. The same as number 12.

19. A kind of fungus, vulgo a fuz-ball. The same with pixy-puffs.

20. The purging flax, *Linum catharticum*. The same with fairy-lint.

21. The flower of the fox-glove, which name is said to come from fairy-folks-glove. My friend, Mr. Hardy, of Penmanshiel, says "the word is from the A.S. foxesclife, foxeclofe, foxesglofa, foxesglofe, and has no reference to fairies."

22. Perhaps fox-glove bells.

23. Fossil sea-urchins.

24. The *ignis fatuus* was anciently called elf-fire. An old tract bears the title "*Ignis Fatuus*, or the Elf-fire of Purgatorie," etc. 4to. London, 1625.

25. The same as note eleven.

26. Waldron tells us of a Fairy Saddle in the Isle of Man which the natives believed to be in requisition every night. It was a stone in the likeness of a saddle— *Works*, fol., p. 176.

27. Luminous appearances oft seen on clothes by night; also called shell-fire. See Ray's *E. and S. Country Words*.

28. Mushrooms.

29. The domestic hand-mills of the Romans.

Also the sound made by the wood-worm viewed by the vulgar as preter-natural. ["The wood-worm is the small brown beetle.— *Anobium domesticum*."—J. H.]

30. Kidney beans.

31, 32. Scenes bearing one or other of these names are by no means rare either in the north or south of England.

33. A Fairykirk occurs in the parish of Caldbeck, Cumberland.

34. Mythical horns occur in several fairy tales.

35. The same as note 9.

36. The same as note 20.

37. Found treasure. See note 10.

38. The same with numbers 12 and 18, I believe. There is a curious superstitious account of one in *MS.* 4811, f. 23.

39. See note 16.

40. A local name for certain old coins. See Harrison's *Hist. Eng.*, p. 218.

41. A kind of fungus.

42. Natural knots in the manes of horses.

43. Toadstools.

44. Certain marks on women with child, or women that do give suck. For a curious account thereof see Ady's *Candle in the Dark*, p. 129. Shakespeare uses the expression elvish marked.

45. Natural caves. Occasionally rocks, somewhat isolated, assuming that form.

46. Natural caves in the earth.

47. Stone beads.

48. A common corn weed is so-called in Sussex. [In Hampshire, "Puck-needle" is the name given to Scandix Pecten-Veneris. See Wright's *Provincial Dictionary.*]

49. The wood-louse. "Cheeselyff-worme, otherwyse called Robyn Godfelowe his louse, tylus." *Huolet*, 1552, part i. p. 6. [This wood-louse is a species of Oniscus.]

50. The same, I believe, with note 21.

51. See Hone's *Year Book*, col. 1533-4.

52. The glow-worm. [Lampyris noctiluca.]

53. In the shady stillness of a summer's eve fairies took delight in bathing and sporting amongst the waters of a lonely pool or sedgy bend of some rippling brook. In some parts of the county of Northamptonshire there are ponds which from this circumstance receive the name of fairy-pools.

54. A hole in a piece of wood, out of which a knot has dropped,

or been driven, by the superstitious viewed as the operation of the fairies.

55. A species of stone-hatchet.

56. This grand annual festival occurred on the first day of May.

57. See Waldron's *Isle of Man*, p. 72.

58. The paralysis is, or rather perhaps was, so called.

59. Wednesday is the fairies' Sabbath or holiday.

60. A changeling. These children were little, backward of their tongue, and seemingly idiots.

XV.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF NORTH OF ENGLAND FOLKLORE.

Michael Scott.

Long before Sir Walter Scott had given increased celebrity to the wizard feats of his clansman, Michael Scott, his fame had penetrated to the remotest villages of Northumberland. Similar anecdotes, but somewhat varied in the telling, have been transmitted of him there, as well as in the hamlets on the northern side of the Borders. The versions with which Sir Walter Scott was acquainted are related in the notes to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.* The following are what I once obtained from Michael M., who had heard them, when living as a young man in the Hexham district. The Northumbrians call the magician Mitchell Scott, and my informant's master used jocularly to address him as "Mitchell Scott, the devil's piper."

Mitchell Scott was on one occasion crossing the sea on the devil's back, and when they were half way over the devil cunningly asked him what the good wives in Scotland said in the morning when they rose. Mitchell wrothfully shouted "Mount, devil, and flee!" If he had replied, "God bless us a' this morning," he would have been drowned.

The fame of Mitchell is great in that district for having beat the devil and his myrmidons by the well-known device of employing them to spin ropes of sand, denying them even the aid of chaff to supply some degree of tenacity to the incohesive material.

In modern times he might have adapted their motive power to some serviceable purposes, but it is firmly believed that even in those dark ages some utilitarian ideas for human comfort or preservation had crossed his mind; for did he not occupy them in erecting the Roman Wall, the whole of which they accomplished in one night?

"Watling Street in many places of England is called Mitchell Scott's Causeway, and it is believed by the credulous vulgar there that the devil and his friend Mitchell made it in one night." * In Stirlingshire also the military causeway and other Roman works are sometimes ascribed to Michael Scott.† In Fifeshire Michael's emissaries cut a roadway through a hill.‡ Michael Scott was desirous to have a road through a marshy piece of country called Cunninghamhead, in Ayrshire. He ordered the devil to execute this task. Vestiges of that road are to be seen to this day.§ Mr. Longstaffe thinks it possible that Michael Scott may be commemorated in "Scot's Corner, near Catterick, and Scot's Dike in Northumberland."‖ Mr. Denham wrote me that he had seen somewhere in print that "the devil and Mitchell Scott built the Roman Wall jointly, and that they completed the work in a fortnight."

He was also consulted as an engineer to render shallow rivers capable of floating ships of burden up to quiet inland towns, whose inhabitants envied the seaports, the flow of traffic ceaselessly pouring through their crowded streets, to the general enrichment, as they thought, of the entire community. Of this

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* Ure's *Hist. of Rutherglen*, p. 133.

† Nimmo's *Hist. of Stirlingshiae*, p. 82.

‡ Blair's *Rambling Recollections*, p. 118.

§ Mitchell and Dickie's *Philosophy of Witchcraft*, p. 290.

‖ "Durham before the Conquest," in *Memoirs of Archæolog. Instit. Northd.*, i. p. 58.

we have an instance in that well-written little book, Chatto's *Rambles in Northumberland* (pp. 47 and 48), which has been largely drawn upon by subsequent writers on Northumbrian Folklore. The River Wansbeck "discharges itself into the sea at a place called Cambois, about nine miles to the eastward, and the tide flows to within five miles of Morpeth. Tradition reports that Michael Scott, whose fame as a wizard is not confined to Scotland, would have brought the tide to the town had not the courage of the person failed upon whom the execution of this project depended. This agent of Michael, after his principal had performed certain spells, was to run from the neighbourhood of Cambois to Morpeth without looking behind, and the tide would follow him. After having advanced a certain distance he became alarmed by the roaring of the waters behind him, and, forgetting the injunction, gave a glance over his shoulder to see if the danger was imminent, when the advancing tide immediately stopped, and the burgesses of Morpeth thus lost the chance of having the Wansbeck navigable between their town and the sea. It is also said that Michael intended to confer a similar favour on the inhabitants of Durham by making the Wear navigable to their city; but his good intentions, which were to be carried into effect in the same manner, were also frustrated through the cowardice of the person who had to 'guide the tide.'"

"Michael Scott," says Sir Walter Scott, "like his predecessor Merlin, fell at last a victim to female art. His wife, or concubine, elicited from him the secret that his art could ward off any danger except the poisonous qualities of broth made of the flesh of a breme sow. Such a mess she accordingly administered to the wizard, who died in consequence of eating it, surviving, however, long enough to put to death his treacherous confidant." (Note 2 E to *Lay of Last Minstrel.*) The Northumbrian statement is more circumstantial, and gives a reverse

turn to the event. Mitchell having told his wife that nothing was more poisonous than the boiled flesh of a breeming sow, she faithlessly took advantage of the confidence reposed in her by preparing for him a dish of the deleterious article, of which he heartily partook. Growing deadly sick, he suspected her infidelity, and ascertaining what she had done, he made inquiry of what had become of the "broo," or water in which it was cooked, for this was the only remedy to counteract the poison. The wife had thrown it out, but being shown the place where this had been done, he drank out of the hollow made by a cow's foot sufficient to allay the baneful effects. He punished his wicked spouse by causing two eggs to be roasted and put fire-hot below her arm-pits, her arms being tied down. She was thus, in a most cruel manner, "burnt to death, the heat reaching to her heart."

Thomas the Rhymer.

Thomas Rhymer's name is equally well known in Northumberland with that of his wonder-working countryman Michael Scott, but I could not recover any more of his sayings than a rhymed couplet of some popular version of his prophetic utterances:

> "When Low Sunday falls on May Day,
> Thomas the Rhymer has nae mair to say."

The author of *Cheviot, a Fragment*, by R. W., seats the dim form of the seer upon a grey crag among the gloomy and often mist-shrouded windings of Dunsdale, which includes as one of its forks Bizzle or Baizle, the highest and most picturesque range of rocks on the great Cheviot.

> "Then came to Dunsdale on the mountain's side,
> Which never yet the sun's bright eye espy'd,

A dismal den, black as the mouth of hell.
Here once, they say, did frightful spirits dwell ;
Now dead or bound, or sunk much deeper down,
Or domineer where Jesus is not known.
Damp streams, gross darkness, and a troubled air,
Stay yet—
Whilst we look on we are with horror seiz'd,
Yet seem with the delusion to be pleas'd.
Here about Lermot sat, who cou'd not climb,
And was contented with mysterious rhyme ;
Ne'er was nor ever will be understood,
And therefore by the most accounted good." *

Thomas Pringle, the poet, seats not "True Thomas," but the "mountain spirit," upon the Hanging Stone. This rock is also on the Cheviots, but further round on the north side, looking towards Scotland. It acquired this name, it is said, from the circumstance that a packman was once resting upon it, with his burden of cloth too near the edge, when the pack slipped over, and its belt tightening round his neck, strangled him, The same thing happened to a robber who was carrying off a stolen sheep, both man and sheep being hanged. It is thus peculiarly adapted for the seat of an unearthly being :

"For there the mountain spirit still
Lingers around the lonely hill,
To guard his wizard grottoes hoar
Where Cimbrian sages dwelt of yore ;
Or, shrouded in his robes of mist,
Ascends the mountain's shaggy breast,
To seize his fearful seat—upon
The elf-enchanted Hanging Stone." †

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* *Cheviot*, by R. W., edited by John Adamson, 1817, pp. 40, 41.

† Pringle's *Poetical Works*, p. 119, London, 1839.

XVI.

BORDER SKETCHES OF FOLKLORE.

The Hunter and his Hounds: a Legend of Brinkburn.

Under a grassy swell, which a stranger may know by its being surrounded with a wooden railing, on the outside of Brinkburn Priory, tradition affirms there is a subterraneous passage, of which the entrance remains as yet a secret, leading to an apartment to which access is in like manner denied; and as these visionary dwellings are invariably provided with occupants, it is asserted that a hunter who had in some way offended one of the priors was along with his hounds, by the aid of enchantment, condemned to perpetual slumber in that mysterious abode. Only once was an unenthralled mortal favoured with a sight of the place and of those who are there entombed alive. A shepherd, with his dog attending him, was one day listlessly sauntering on this verdant mound, when he felt the ground stirring beneath him, and springing aside he discovered a flat door, where door had never before been seen by man—yea, that door opening upwards of its own accord on the very spot where he had been standing. Actuated by curiosity he descended a number of steps which appeared beneath him, and on reaching the bottom found himself in a gloomy passage of great extent. Groping along this warily, he at last encountered a door, which opening readily, he along with the dog was suddenly admitted into an apartment illumined so brilliantly that the full light of day seemed to shine there. This

abrupt transition from darkness to light for some minutes deprived him of the power of observing objects correctly, but gradually recovering he beheld enough to strike him with astonishment, for on one side at a table, with his head resting on his hand, slept one in the garb of a hunter, while at some distance another figure reclined on the floor with his head lying back, and around him lay many a noble hound, ready as ever to all appearance to renew that fatal chase which consigned them all to the chamber of enchantment. On the table lay a horn and a sword, which, seeing all was quiet, the shepherd stepped forward to examine, and taking up the horn first applied it to his lips to sound it; but the hunter, on whom he kept a watch, showed symptoms of awaking whenever he made the attempt, which alarming him he replaced it, and the figure started no longer. Reassured, he lifts the sword, half draws it, and now both men became restless and made some angry movements, and the hounds began to hustle about, while his own dog, as if agitated by the same uneasiness, slunk towards the door. Alive to the increased commotion and hearing a noise behind him very like the creaking of hinges, he suddenly turned round and found to his dismay that the door was moving to. Without waiting a moment he rushed through the half-closed entrance followed by his dog. He had not fled ten paces when, shaking the vault with the crash, the door shut behind him, and a terrible voice assailed his ears pouring maledictions on him for his temerity. The fugitives traversed the passage at full speed, and gladly hailed the light streaming in at the aperture above. The shepherd quickly ascended the steps, but before he got out the cover had nearly closed. He succeeded, and that was all, in escaping perhaps a worse fate than those victims of monkish thraldom which he had just left; but his poor dog was not so fortunate, for it had just raised its fore-parts to come up when the door fastened on it and nipped it through!

This story, being a family inheritance of the European race of people, has obtained a wide circulation, and there are many modes of telling it, answerable to the far separated localities to which it has been adapted. We recognise it in the banished Saturn reposing in a cave on a remote desolate coast (1); in the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (2); in the seven foreign brethren, in Roman habits, lying in a profound slumber in a cave on the shores of the ocean in the extreme northern confines of Germany (3); in the three founders of the Helvetic Confederacy, whom herdsmen call the Three Tells, who sleep in their antique garb till Switzerland's hour of need, in a cavern near the lake of Lucerne (4); in Ogier the Dane, or Holger Danske, enchanted in the vaults of the Castle of Cronenburgh (5); in Frederick Barbarossa, miraculously preserved to unite the Eastern and Western Empires in the Kylfhauser Berg in Thuringia, or, according to another legend, in the Untersberg, near Salsburg (6), but in the latter place the tradition vacillates betwixt him and the great Emperor Charles V. (7); and in the legend of the tomb of Rosencreutz, as told in the 379th number of the *Spectator*. Transferred to Britain, it has peopled the mountain and sea-side caves with enchanted warriors and huntsmen. In the subsequent notice will be found the parallel tales of "King Arthur and Sewingshields." The story crops out in the tale of the "Wizard's Cave" at Tynemouth (8). The correct legend about Dunstanborough Castle, tells that its chieftain was charmed with his hounds, his sword, and bugle-

(1) *Plutarch.* (2) *Gibbon.* (3) *Paulus Diaconus de Gestis Longobardum*, lib. i. c. 4; *Olaus Magnus Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus; Romæ*, 1555, lib. i. c. 3. (4) Mrs. Hemans' *Works*, ii. p. 65; *Quarterly Review*, March, 1820. (5) Inglis's *Journey through Norway, Sweden, and Denmark*, pp. 290, 291; *Quarterly Review, ubi sup.* (6) Menzel's *History of Germany*, i. p. 487; *Quarterly Review*, 1820. (7) Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 234. (8) Hone's *Table Book*,

horn, and enclosed in one of the vaults of that ancient fortress (9), the adjuncts of Monk Lewis, Service, and others being imaginary. At Fastcastle the adventurer comes out a hoary-headed man, minus his coat tails. In the Cheviots the cave contains "three men in armour," surrounded with their "hounds, hawks, and horses" (10). Sir Walter Scott in an early poem makes them an army assembled to aid Halbert Kerr, by the spells of Sir Michael Scott (11). Sometimes they are to return with Thomas of Ercildoune, and meanwhile remain entranced within the chambers of the Eildon hills (12). The vault at Roslin holds alive a warrior who may be approached every seven years, and the difficulty to free him here, as well as elsewhere, depends on the choice of the horn or the sword. Thomas the Rhymer, with a mighty host, lies asleep under Tom-na-hurich, a mountain near Inverness.

"Beside each coal-black courser sleeps a knight,
A raven plume waves o'er each helmed crest,
And black the mail which binds each manly breast;
Girt with broad faulchion, and with bugle green,
Say, who is he, with summons strong and high,
That bids the charmed sleep of ages fly,
While each dark warrior rouses at the blast,
His horn, his faulchion grasps with mighty hand,
And peals proud Arthur's march from Fairy-land!"

*Leyden.**

ii. pp. 747-750. (9) *Widdrington, a Tale of Hedgley Moor*, by James Hall, p. 84; Alnwick, 1827. (10) *Poems by Robert Davidson of Morebattle*, p. 172. (11) Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, i. p. 310, &c. (12) Scott's *Demonology*, p. 133, where a similar story is cited from Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*; Leyden's *Poetical Remains*, p. 357.

* For more on this subject see Kelly's *Indo-European Tradition and Folklore*, pp. 284-289, and not consulted when the above was written in 1864; also Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, iv. p. 85.

Legends of King Arthur and of Sewingshields.

On this subject I have already written in the *Local Historian's Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. pp. 37-46, and this might be thought to be sufficient, but the preceding illustration would not be complete without the corresponding native versions of the legend being placed in juxtaposition with it.

Sewingshields lies between the Roman Wall and the military road, near the twenty-eighth mile stone from Newcastle, and at the western extremity of Warden Parish. Of Sewingshields Castle, Mr. Hodgson informs us that in his time a square, low, lumpy mass of ruins, overgrown with nettles, still remained. "Its site is on the end of a dry ridge and overlooked from the south by the basaltic cliffs, along the brow of which the Roman Wall was built. There are also some traces of trenches near it." * This is the castle referred to by Sir Walter Scott in the sixth canto of *Harold the Dauntless* as the "castle of the seven shields." In reference to its present condition Dr. Bruce remarks,† "Too truly he says:

> 'No towers are seen
> On the wild heath, but those that Fancy builds.
> And save a fosse that tracks the moor with green,
> Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been.'"

"It stood in the centre of the only patch of ground in 'the moss,' which is now subjected to the plough. The walls have been uprooted and the vaults removed, but the following tradition relating to it will not readily perish." ‡

"Immemorial tradition has asserted that King Arthur, his

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* Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, part ii. vol. iii.

† *Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, p. 109.

‡ Ibid.

queen Guenever, his court of lords and ladies, and his hounds, were enchanted in some cave of the crags, or in a hall below the Castle of Sewingshields, and would continue entranced there till some one should first blow a bugle-horn that lay on a table near the entrance of the hall, and then with 'the sword of the stone' cut a garter also placed there beside it. But none had ever heard where the entrance to this enchanted hall was till the farmer at Sewingshields, about fifty years since, was sitting knitting on the ruins of the castle and his clew fell and ran downwards through a rush of briars and nettles, as he supposed, into a deep subterranean passage. Full in the faith that the entrance into King Arthur's hall was now discovered, he cleared the briary portal of its weeds and rubbish, and entering a vaulted passage followed, in his darkling way, the thread of his clew. The floor was infested with toads and lizards; and the dark wings of bats, disturbed by his unhallowed intrusion, flitted fearfully around him. At length his sinking courage was strengthened by a dim, distant light, which as he advanced grew gradually brighter, till at once he entered a vast and vaulted hall, in the centre of which a fire without fuel, from a broad crevice in the floor, blazed with a high and lambent flame that showed all the carved walls and fretted roof, and the monarch and his queen and court reposing around in a theatre of thrones and costly couches. On the floor, beyond the fire, lay the faithful and deep-toned pack of thirty couple of hounds; and on a table before it the spell-dispelling horn, sword, and garter. The shepherd reverently but firmly grasped the sword, and as he drew it leisurely from its rusty scabbard the eyes of the monarch and his courtiers began to open, and they rose till they sat upright. He cut the garter; and as the sword was being slowly sheathed the spell assumed its ancient power, and they all gradually sank to rest; but not before the monarch had lifted up his eyes and hands and exclaimed:

'O woe betide that evil day
On which this witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword—the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle-horn!'

"Of this favourite tradition the most remarkable variation is respecting the place where the farmer descended. Some say that after the king's denunciation terror brought on a loss of memory, and he was unable to give any correct account of his adventure or the place where it occurred. But all agree that Mrs. Spearman, the wife of another and more recent occupier of the estate, had a dream, in which she saw a rich hoard of treasure among the ruins of the castle, and that for many days together she stood over workmen employed in searching for it, but without success." *

Mr. Errington, a recent tenant, has removed the vaults altogether, without making any discoveries of moment.

The version of this story that I obtained from a native of South Northumberland is less circumstantial, but its verity is not the less to be depended on.

A shepherd one day, in quest of a strayed sheep, on the crags near Sewingshields, had his steps arrested by a ball of thread. This he laid hold of, and pursuing the path which it pointed out, found it led into a cavern, in the recesses of which, as the guiding line used by miners in their explorations of devious passages, it appeared to lose itself. As he approached he felt perforce constrained to follow the strange conductor that had so marvellously come into his hands. After passing through a long and dreary vestibule he was ushered into an apartment in the interior. An immense fire blazed on the hearth, and cast its broad flashes to the remotest corner of the

* Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, part ii. vol. iii. p. 287.

chamber. Over it was placed a huge cauldron, as if preparations were being made for a feast on an extensive scale. Two hounds lay on either side of the fireplace, in the stillness of unbroken slumber. The only remarkable piece of furniture in the apartment was a table, covered with green cloth. At the head of the table, a being considerably advanced in years, of a dignified mien, and clad in the habiliments of war, sat, as it were, fast asleep in an arm-chair. At the other end of the table lay a horn and a sword. Notwithstanding these signs of life, throughout the chamber there prevailed a dead silence, the very feeling of which made the shepherd reflect that he had advanced beyond the limits of human experience, and that he was now in the presence of objects that belonged more to death than to life! The very idea made his flesh creep. He, however, had the fortitude left to advance to the table and lift the horn. The hounds pricked up their ears, and the grisly veteran "started up on his elbow," and raising his half unwilling eyes, told the staggered hind that if he would blow the horn and draw the sword he would confer upon him the honours of knighthood, to last through time. But such unheard-of dignities from a source so ghastly either met with no appreciation from the awe-stricken swain, or the terror of finding himself alone in the company, it might be, of malignant phantoms, who were only tempting him to his ruin, became too urgent to be resisted, and therefore proposing to divide the peril with a comrade, he groped his darkling way, as best his quaking limbs could support him, back to the blessed daylight. On his return with a reinforcement of strength and courage every vestige of the opening of a cavern was obliterated. Thus failed another of the repeated opportunities for releasing the spell-bound King of Britain from the "charmed sleep of ages." Within his rocky chamber he still sleeps on, as tradition tells, till the appointed hour.

Of the "Castle of the Seven Shields," thus Sir Walter Scott sings:

"Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lie stow'd,
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven and toad,
Whoever shall question these chambers within,
From curfew till matins that treasure shall win.

But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old!
There lives not in Britain a champion so bold,
So dauntless of heart and so prudent of brain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to gain.

The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumberland fly,
And the flint cliffs of Bambro' shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be peril'd and won." *

One more local tradition of King Arthur is told by Dr. Bruce: "To the north of Sewingshields, two strata of sandstone crop out to the day; the highest points of each ledge are called the King and Queen's Crag, from the following legend. King Arthur, seated on the furthest rock, was talking with his queen, who, meanwhile, was engaged in arranging her 'back hair.' Some expression of the queen's having offended his majesty, he seized a rock which lay near him, and with an exertion of strength for which the Picts were proverbial, threw it at her, a distance of about a quarter of a mile! The queen with great dexterity caught it upon her comb, and thus warded off the blow; the stone fell between them, where it lies to this very day, with the marks of the comb upon it, to attest the truth of the story. It probably weighs about twenty tons.'" †

* *Harold the Dauntless*, canto iv. "The Legend of Shewin Shields" has been made the subject of a poem by James Service. He makes the hero of the adventure a sort of Rip van Winkle.—*Metrical Legends of Northumberland*, Alnwick, 1834, 8vo., pp. 124, 139.

† *Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, pp. 110, 111.

"Near the farmhouse of Sewingshiels," says Mr. Hodgson, "several basaltic columns rose very proudly and remarkably in the front of the high and rugged cliff that the wall had traversed, and one of these in particular was called by some King Arthur, and by others King 'Ethel's' chair. It was a single, many-sided shaft, about ten feet high, and had a natural seat on its top, like a chair with a back, but was most wantonly overturned a few years since by a mischievous lad." A variety of other curule seats of ancient monarchs existed till recently in various parts of the country. On a rock which overhung the Maiden Well at Wooler, and on the precipitous margin of the Maiden Camp, was a natural chair called the "King's Seat," whereon a king sat and viewed his army fighting in the cramped-up hollow beneath; for, adds the legend, it "was the custom for kings in those days to sit." This rocky throne has unfortunately been quarried away. A similar chair exists on Twinlaw, one of the Lammermoor range, in Berwickshire—a hill celebrated in the traditionary annals of fraternal discord.* The unfortunate James IV. of Scotland occupied a kindred position during a part of the fatal day of Flodden Field, and posterity, with true attachment to a theme so melancholy, till recently offered to the passing stranger's gaze the King's Chair. "It is," or rather was, says Wallis (*History of Northumberland*, ii. p. 471), "a natural rock, on the highest part of Flodden Hill, from which he had a good view of his own and of the English army, and of the country around him." This is also now quarried away. Arthur's seat, near Edinburgh, has also its tradition of this class. There is a hill called King's Seat about the head of Breamish, between the Hanging Stone and Russell's Cairn; and a King's Seat also in the Lammer-

* *New Statistical Account of Scotland, Berwickshire*, p. 93. The information about the chair is from oral testimony.

moors of East Lothian. But on this subject it would be prosaic to insist. It has been "married to immortal verse":

> "A king sate on the rocky brow
> Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
> And ships, by thousands, lay below,
> And men in nations—all were his!
> He counted them at break of day—
> And when the sun set where were they?"
>
> *Byron.*

In South Africa it is a chieftain's ambition that he should be seated aloft on a crag. Moshesh leading the Basutos to take vengeance on the Mantaetis, a neighbouring tribe, addresses them: "To-morrow, brothers, you will have reconquered for me yonder high rock, whereon the Mantaeti sits at ease; you will offer it me for my seat, mine." The army hissed its applause, crying, "Thou shall sit, thou shalt sit on the rock, O King."*

In some instances these eminences may have been judgment-seats of ancient courts. On Kyle Hill, in the parish of Clonfert Mulloe, in Queen's County, Leinster, "is an ancient judgment-seat of the Brehons, formed in the solid rock, called by the peasantry here the "Fairy-chair." This was the tribunal of the Brehon of the Fitzpatricks."† Saints also had their memorial seats on hills. The hill on the south side of Kilcattan Bay is called Suid Chattan, or St. Cattan's Seat, and the hill on the farm of South Garrachtie (both being in Bute) is called Suidh Bhlain, or St. Blane's Seat.‡ If we consult Camden's *Britannia*, it will be found that these mountain seats are quite numerous.

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* *Good Words*, 1862, p. 284.

† Gorton's *Topographical Dictionary of Great Britain and Ireland*, i. p. 468.

‡ Wilson's *Guide to Rothesay*, p. 133. Rothesay, 1848.

The Bells of Brinkburn.

Centuries ago one of the priors of Brinkburn presented the bells of that building to the priory of Durham. They had been the pride of the secluded sanctuary on the Coquet, for their tones were possessed of great power combined with sweetness, and many tempting offers had Durham made to secure them, but hitherto to no purpose. But she prevailed at length, and the bells so coveted were removed from the tower and dispatched on horseback on their way to Durham under the care of some monks. They journeyed till they reached the River Font, which, owing to a quantity of rain having fallen, was much swelled. However, they prepared to ford it; but when the horses reached the middle of the stream the bells by some means fell, or, according to the popular belief, were removed from the backs of the horses by miraculous interposition, and sank to the bottom. Owing either to the dangerous state of the stream or from the bells being unwilling to be removed, the exertions of the monks to recover them proved unavailing; so they returned to Brinkburn and reported the disaster. But the Brinkburn prior, determined not to be baffled, sent forthwith a messenger to Durham to request the presence of his brother prior, and both ecclesiastics then proceeded with a full attendance to liberate the imprisoned bells; and lo! the superior abilities of high church functionaries over humble monks was manifest to everyone; for they had no sooner ridden into the stream than the bells were lifted with ease; and, being conveyed to Durham, were lodged there in safety. To this day it is a saying in Coquetdale that "Brinkburn bells are heard at Durham;" and Wallis, in his *History of Northumberland*, assures us that the bells of Brinkburn were removed to the cathedral on the banks of the Wear. Still there are doubters. Walter White, in 1859, says "the deep pool where the bells were lost is still to

be seen in the river" [Coquet] (13); and Mr. Wilson is positive that some years ago "a fragment of the bell was found buried at the root of a tree on the hill on the opposite side of the river" (14).

Of the bells, William Howitt, in his *Visit to Remarkable Places, &c.*, p. 526, note, says: "The bell tower looks down upon the Bell Pool, a very deep part of the Coquet, lying concealed beneath the thick foliage of the native trees that jut out from the interstices of the lofty, craggy heights, impending over either side. Tradition says that into this pool the bells were thrown in a time of danger in order to place them beyond the reach of the invading Scots. It is still a favourite amusement among the young swimmers of the neighbourhood to dive for the bells of Brinkburn, and then it is generally believed that when the bells are found other treasures will be recovered with them."

I fear that several of the tales of "flitted" bells are popular myths. Thus tradition says that the bell of Coldingham Abbey was transported to Lincoln, and is still there (15). It was a popular opinion that the bells of Jedburgh Abbey were lost in the Tweed opposite Kelso, in an attempt made to ferry them across. "Another tradition is that they were carried off to Hexham, and fitted up to adorn the venerable cathedral there" (16).

Of the bells of the abbey of Cambuskenneth, in Clackmannanshire, it is reported that one was for some time in the town of Stirling, but that the finest was lost in its passage across the River Forth (17). The Bell of Morven Church had been

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(13) *Northumberland and the Border*, p. 197. (14) *Berwickshire Nat. Club's Proc.*, iv. p. 140. (15) Fullarton's *Gazetteer of Scotland*, i. p. 290. Hunter's *Coldingham Priory*, p. 75. (16) Hilson's *Guide to Jedburgh*, p. 15. (17) Fullarton's *Gazetteer*, i. p. 233.

transferred from Iona (18). There is a tradition that St. Murce used to preach at a place called Ashig, on the north-east coast of the Isle of Skye, "and that he hung a bell in a tree, where it remained for centuries. It was dumb all the week till sunrise on Sunday morning, when it rang of its own accord till sunset. It was subsequently removed to the old church of Strath, dedicated to another saint, where it ever afterwards remained dumb, and the tree on which it had so long hung after withered away"(19). Bells were sometimes not satisfied with their new positions. They required to be tied till they were reconciled to the change. Many of them, says Brand, "are said to have retained great affection for the churches to which they belonged and where they were consecrated. When a bell was removed from its original and favourite situation, it was sometimes supposed to take a nightly trip to its old place of residence, unless exercised in the evening and secured with a chain or rope" (20).

The tolling of the bell of Brinkburn Priory was once the occasion of the burning of the pile by a party of marauding Scots, who would not have discovered its situation, so densely it stood embosomed in woods, except for this imprudence (21).

Mr. Wilson says the fairies lie buried at Brinkburn. This mortality, unheard of elsewhere, must have been attributable to the potency of the bells. Half a century ago the bell of the parish kirk of Hounam, in Roxburghshire, fell; in consequence of which the banished fairies reassembled from the ends of the earth to resume their revelry on the green banks of the Kale. But the mischief that they perpetrated was insufferable, and as a remedy the bell was reinstated, when matters were restored

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(18) Dr. N. M'Leod, in *Good Words*, 1863, p. 837. (19) Dr. W. Reeves on "Moelrubha," in *Proceed. of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 291. (20) Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, ii. 136. (21) Richardson's *Table-Book*, Leg. Div., i. p. 223.

in statu quo ante (22). This is true to the general belief about these beings. "There is a hill near Botna, in Sweden, in which formerly dwelt a troll, a sort of Scandinavian fairy. When they got up bells in Botna Church, and he heard the ringing of them, he is related to have said:

'Pleasant it were in Botnahill to dwell,
Were it not for the sound of that plaguey bell.'

It is said that a farmer having found a troll sitting very disconsolate on a stone near Tiis lake, in the island of Zealand, and taking him at first for a decent Christian man, accosted him with, 'Well! where are you going, friend?' 'Ah!' said he, in a melancholy tone, 'I am going off out the country. I cannot live here any longer, they keep such eternal ringing and dinging!'" (23).

Hid Treasure.

In the South of Scotland "it is believed that there is concealed at Tamleuchar Cross, in Selkirkshire, a valuable treasure, of which the situation is thus vaguely described in a popular rhyme:

'Atween the wat grund and the dry,
The gowd o' Tamleuchar doth lie'" (24).

A correspondent thus writes: "Before the old kirk of Hutton (I think more than twenty years since) was taken down, a man from about Newcastle, who professed to be a money-finder, came down to Hutton and gave out that there was a large sum of money concealed under a stone a few yards from the church. He actually commenced operations in quest of it, but soon decamped and was no more heard of. This is the only instance, and a very recent one, that I can remember of a money search in Berwickshire."

(22) Davidson's *Poems*, pp. 100, &c., 222, 223. (23) Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 112. (24) Chambers's *Pop. Rhymes*, p. 240.

The following Irish formula furnishes another example of the singularly systematic consistency in the observances prescribed for such adventures: "You know the rock beside your mother's cabin; in the east end of that rock there is a loose stone, covered over with grey moss, just two feet below the cleft out of which the hanging rowan tree grows; pull that stone out and you will find more gold than would make a duke. Neither speak to any person, nor let any living thing touch your lips till you come back" (25).

It is to be hoped that there are now few who regard these stories otherwise than as exploded fictions of the days gone by. But if believers in them there are any, it would be lost labour to expostulate with them for being under an infatuation; they would not, like the Arab sheik, be convinced, even by the oath of their own brother. "Osman," said he, "I would not believe it if that brother had sworn it. I know there is treasure in the Wady Moussa; I have dug for it, and I mean to dig for it again (26).

Fairies.

The Rev. John Horsley in his *Materials for the History of Northumberland*, gathered in 1729-30, and printed by the late Mr. Hodgson Hinde, says, "The stories of fairies seem now to be much worn both out of date and out of credit." This is, however, incorrect, so far as regards country people, long after Horsley's time. An old man once said to me that in the part of Northumberland where he dwelt there was a time when there was not a solitary hawthorn tree away out on the green hills, standing amid its circuit of fine cropped grass, that was not

(25) Carleton's *Three Tasks*, &c., p. 90. (26) Stephens' *Travels in Egypt*, &c., chap. 22.

witness to the fairy revel and dance held beneath its encircling branches in the twilight or by the pale light of the moon. The Northumbrian fairies, numerous as they were, had been once a shy people, and little now can be gathered about their ongoings, which, however, have the same peculiarities as have been told of them in other favourite haunts. I shall give the few simple stories that I have heard as they were told to me.

A woman had a child that was remarkably puny. It was voracious enough, "but put all the meat it got within an ill skin," and never grew any, and there were shrewd suspicions that it was a changeling. One day a neighbour came running into her house, and shouted out, "Come here, and ye'll see a sight! Yonder's the Fairy Hill a' alowe." "Waes me! what'll come o' my wife and bairns?" screamed out the elf in the bed, and straightway made its exit up the chimney.

A ploughman was once engaged with his team, consisting of two oxen and two horses, with a boy to guide them, in tilling a field at Humshaugh, near the North Tyne, which was reputed to be haunted by the fairies. While at one of the "land ends" he hears a great kirnin' going on, somewhere near him. He made another circuit, and listening, was aware of a doleful voice lamenting: "Alack-a-day I've broken my kirn-staff, what will I do?" "Give it to me, and I'll mend it," cries the good-natured ploughman; and on his return from the next "bout," he found the kirn-staff laid out for him, along with a hammer and nails. He carefully repaired and left it, when after making another turn he came back to the spot it was gone, and a liberal supply of bread and butter was set down in its place. He and the boy partook of the repast, and all the cattle had a share, except one ox, which resisted every effort to force the food upon it. Before he got to the next land's end the stubborn brute dropped down dead. I have heard the story told in almost the same manner in Berwickshire. Parallel instances of fairies

requiring human aid to mend their utensils may be found in Jabez Allies, "On the Ignis Fatuus, or Will-o'-the-Wisp and the Fairies," extracted in *Athenæum*, 1846, p. 955; also l. c. p. 1085.

Mothers sometimes brought the cradle to the field in the harvest time and left it at the ridge end, when the little inmate would be liable to be exchanged for one of fairy breed. To deter children who gleaned behind the reapers from interfering with the stooks, it was customary to tell them that baits of "fairy butter" were placed among the sheaves, and if they were tempted to touch and eat it the fairies would kidnap them. Of "fairy butter," Mr. Denham in a letter relates: "A story is told here (Pierse Bridge) how that, some women going into the field to work rather earlier one morning than usual, now some fifty or sixty years ago, found as much as nearly a pound upon the top of a gate post, how they carefully gathered it into a basin, and how they each and all partook, and found it to be the 'nicest butther that ony o' them had iver taästed.'"

A fairy man and woman once entrusted the up-bringing of one of their offspring to a man in Netherwitton. He received along with it a box of ointment, with which he was enjoined regularly to rub its eyes, but he was to be careful not to touch his own with it, otherwise he would incur a heavy penalty. Curiosity overcame his scruples, and he anointed one of his eyes with the ointment without experiencing any inconvenience. Having gone to Long Horsley fair, he saw both the man and woman moving about among the fair people, and thinking there could be no harm in it he accosted them. Surprised to be thus recognised, they inquired with what eye he saw them, and he told them, whereupon they blew into his eye and it became blinded. The child was removed before his return home.

A midwife in Northumberland was one night summoned by a man to go out and perform her office to a sufferer "in the

straw," to which she consented. Mounted on horseback behind him, she was carried with incredible rapidity over an immense space to a cottage, where the woman was soon after delivered of a healthy child. An attendant brought to the midwife ointment in a box, with which she was to anoint the child all over, but she was to beware of putting any of it on her own eyes. Involuntarily, while executing her task, she happened to draw her fingers across her eyes to remove some obstruction of sight, and immediately her eyes were opened and she saw that she was not in a cottage at all, but in the midst of a wild waste, where all the fairy population was assembled round her. She had the presence of mind not to betray any alarm, and having done all that was required, she was conveyed back to her dwelling with the same dispatch with which she had been taken from it. Subsequently, being at a market, she observed among the crowd the man and woman with whom she had formed this singular acquaintance, as well as other agents invisible to man, passing from stall to stall and purloining bits of butter and other edibles. She addressed them and asked them their reasons for these proceedings. "Which eye do you see us with?" asked they. "With both," said she; and they blew into them and both were blinded. Of this and the previous story there are many variations.

At Chathill farm, north of Alnwick, there was a famous fairy ring, round which the children of the place could venture to dance any times less than nine. If they had exceeded the prescribed number of rounds they would have been taken away by the fairies. It was customary there for the fairies to lay "goodies" and presents of food for cleanly children, but when the parents became aware of it the practice was discontinued.

These three last incidents were told me by Mr. G. B. Richardson, formerly of Newcastle, who afterwards gave a somewhat embellished version in the *Table Book*, published by

his father, vol. iii. p. 45, &c. (Legendary Division), along with other examples which he has not quite carefully referred to their proper authorities. Having misprinted the word "fairies" as "faries," he induced Keightley, who quotes the stories, mistakingly to suppose that in Northumberland "fairy" was pronounced "farry." (*Fairy Mythology*, p. 310, note.)

In a Book of Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings in the Courts of Durham from 1565 to 1573, we find that "the farye" was recognised as a disease which required for its treatment magical agency. Robert Duncan, of Walsend, near Newcastle, farmer, aged 72 years, depones: "He haithe hard saye that Jennet Pereson uses wytchecraft in measuringe of belts to preserve folks from the farye." Catherine Fenwick, daughter of Constance Fenwick, gentlewoman, aged about 20 years, saith: "That about 2 yeres ago his cosyn Edward Wyddrington had a childe seke, and Jenkyn Pereson['s] wyfe axed of Thomas Blackberd, then this deponente mother servannte, how Byngemen (Benjamin) the child did, and bad the said Blackberd byd the childe's mother comme and speke with hir. And upon the same this deponent went unto hir, and the said Pereson wyfe said that the child was taken with the farye, and bad hir sent 2 for southrowninge (south-running) water, and theis 2 shull not speke by the waye, and that the child shuld be washed in that water and dib the shirt in the water, and so hang it upon a hedge all that night, and that on the morowe the shirt shuld be gone, and the child shuld recover health: but the shirt was not gone, as she said. And this deponent paid to Pereson wife 3d. for hir paynes, otherwais she knoweth not whether she is a wytche or not." Robert Thompson, vicar of Benton, aged 52 years: "Dicit that he herd one wedo Archer doughter, called Elisabethe Gibson, saye that Jenkyn Pereson wyfe heled hir mother, who was taken with the farye, and gave hir 6d. for hir paynes, and that the said

Jenkyn Pereson wyfe toke 3d. of Edmond Thompson for a like matter." * Elsewhere "the Fayrie" is accounted a peculiar disease, probably from its name ascribed to fairy influence. "For one that is stricken with the Fayrie, spread oyle de Bay on a linnen cloth, and lay it above the sore, for that will drive it into every part of the body: but if the sore be above the heart, apply it beneath the sore, and to the nape of the necke." † Again we are told, both instances no doubt translated from older works, "The roote and seedes (of Peony), hanged about the necke of children, is good against the falling sicknesse, and the haunting of the fairies and goblins." ‡

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* Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham, from 1311 to the Reign of Elizabeth. (Surtees Society, pp. 99, 100.)

† Langham's *Garden of Health*, p. 47. London, 1574.

‡ *Ib.*, p. 463. See also Sussex Folkfore, in *Folklore Record*, i. p. 44, this use of the plant being still in vogue to prevent convulsions and to aid dentition; also Mr. Henderson's *Folk-Lore*, p. 21. Pliny says of Peony: "This plant is a preservative against the illusions practised by the Fauni in sleep," *i.e.* the nightmare (*Nat. Hist.*, book xxv. chap. 10; Bohn's English edition, v. p. 89; Galen, lib. vi.). Simpl. Medic. is the author of the prescription of the roots being suspended round the neck as a cure for epilepsy; and Matthiolus in his Commentary on Dioscorides supplies us with the figment about the seeds. "There are not wanting," says he, "old wives who, boring holes in the seeds of the pæony, string them like coral beads and tie them round the necks of their children, being in the belief that this amulet will keep off the epilepsy." *P. A. Matthioli Commentarii in Libros P. Dioscorides*, &c., pp. 594, 595. Venetiis, 1570. See also Culpepper's *English Physician*, whence the popular belief is probably derived. For the connection between the pæony and the "Herculean disease," epilepsy to wit, see *Cowley on Plants*, book iii. Lovell (*Herball*, p. 334) says of pæony, "It heals such as are thought to be bewitcht, allaid with rue, fennel, and dill-waters."

In South Northumberland a great deterrent as well as revealer of the fairies, and a preventative of their influence, was a "four-neuked clover" (a quadrifoil), although a "five-neuked" specimen (a cinquefoil) is reckoned equally efficacious. This I learned from the people. Mr. Chatto furnishes an instance. "Many years ago, a girl who lived near Netherwitton, returning home from milking with a pail upon her head, saw many fairies gamboling in the fields, but which were invisible to her companions, though pointed out to them by her. On reaching home and telling what she had seen, the circumstance of her power of vision being greater than that of her companions was canvassed in the family, and the cause at length discovered in her weise,* which was found to be of four-leaved clover—persons having about them a bunch, or even a single blade, of four-leaved clover being supposed to possess the power of seeing fairies, even though the elves should wish to be invisible; of perceiving in their proper character evil spirits which assumed the form of men, and of detecting the arts of those who practised magic, necromancy, or witchcraft."† Taylor, the water-poet, banters such pretenders as could cure diseases by charms. Among others —

> "With two words and three leaves of four-leav'd grass,
> He makes the tooth-ache stay, repass, or pass."

"Half a century ago," says Mr. George Tate, in his *History of Alnwick*, i. p. 438, "the fairies were supposed to have local habitations in our district. There was a Fairies' Green not far from Vittry's Cross; but on moonlight nights these tiny folk trooped out of dell, and cavern, and mine, and from

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* The weise is a circular pad, commonly made of an old stocking, but sometimes merely a wreath of straw or grass, to save the head from the pressure of the pail.

† *Rambles in Northumberland*, p. 106; see also Napier's *Folk-Lore in the West of Scotland*, pp. 130, 132, 133.

beneath the bracken, and from under green knowes, and out of other lonely places, to hold their revels with music and dance in the Fairies' Hollow at the top of Clayport Bank. Their favourite haunt was the Hurle Stane, near to Chillingham New Town, around which they danced to the sound of elfin music, singing:

> 'Wind about and turn again,
> And thrice around the Hurle Stane;
> Round about and wind again,
> And thrice around the Hurle Stane.'

"Brinkburn and Harehope Hill too they frequented. Old Nannie Alnwick, the widow of the last of the ancient race of Alnwick, the tanners, had faith in the good folk, and set aside for them 'a loake of meal and a pat of butter,' receiving, as she said, a double return from them; and often had she seen them enter into Harehope Hill, and heard their pipe music die away as the green hill closed over them."

On one occasion, while visiting Alnwick, Mr. Tate pointed out to me the Fairies' Hollow at the head of Clayport, and a series of steps, or rather little benches, caused by subsidences of the soil, rising in a gentle gradient to Swansfield Gate, which had obtained the name of the "Fairy Steps."

The last of the fairy race are said to be interred in Brinkburn under a green mound. (*Table Book*, Leg. Div., iii. p. 48; F. R. Wilson, *Ber. Nat. Club Proc.*, iv. p. 145.) On Fawdon Hill, one of a series of low round-topped grassy eminences, was held the fairy court; the Elf Hills are still pointed out near Cambo, and the Dancing Green at Debdon, near Rothbury; the "Dancing Green Knowe," among the brown heathy-backed Cockenheugh range, as well as the Dancing Hall, where stretch the bleak moors behind Beanley, still testify by their names to their being resorts of the "good people" for their favourite diversion. "Even in our own day," says Mr. Robert White

(*Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. pp. 131-2) "many places are pointed out as having formerly been the chief resorts of the elfin people. A small stream called the Elwin, or Allan, which falls into the Tweed from the north, a little above Melrose, was a noted locality, so also was Beaumont Water, on the north of Cheviot; and the gravelly beds of both are remarkable for a kind of small stones of a rounded or spiral form, as if produced from the action of a lathe, called 'Fairy cups' and 'dishes.' [These are concretions segregated from fine clay. I have a good series from the Nameless dean, on the Alwen or Elwand, but the locality where they were obtained is now covered up. I have also picked up similar fairy stones, known as such to the country people, in South Middleton dean among the Cheviots, and they occur in some of the banks on the lower course of the Tweed.] The chief haunt in Liddesdale was a stream which empties itself into the Liddell from the south, called Harden Burn. On the north side of the village of Gunnerton, in Northumberland, is a small burn, in the rocky channel of which are many curious perforations, called by the country people 'fairy kerns.' Similar indentations are likewise observed in the course of Hart, near Rothley. In Redesdale also the 'train' was accustomed to dance at the Howestane-mouth, near Rochester, and at the Dowcraig Top, a solitary spot about a mile north of Otterburne." At Housesteads, by the Roman Wall, on a meadow once occupied by a suburb of the military station of Borcovicus, the fairies come from an adjacent cave for their moonlight dances.* To the west of the station of Vindolana, or Chesterholm, are the ruins of an extensive building which has been furnished with hypocausts. "The pillars long retained the marks of fire and soot, which gave rise to the popular belief that a colony of fairies had here established themselves, and

* W. S. Gibson's *Memoir on Northumberland*, 1st edit., p. 34.

that this was their kitchen."* There were once a "fairy stone" and a "fairy trough," near Fourstanes, on the borders of Cumberland and Northumberland. "In the rebellion of 1715, a square recess with a cover in the fairy stone was employed to receive the correspondence of the rebel chiefs, and a little boy clad in green came in the twilight of every evening to rescue the letters left in it for Lord Derwentwater and deposit his answers, which were 'spirited' away in the same manner by the agents of his friends." †

A number of them dwelt apart in the remotest glen of all that scar the sides of the Cheviot Hills, where, among a most desolate scene of peat hags, plashy bogs, and dashing waterfalls, up among grey craggy declivities, and slopes of treacherous and slippery boulders, is the obscure opening of a cavern called "Eelin's Hole," whose final termination no one has ever been able to reach. Into this gloomy receptacle they are said to have once lured a party of hunters who were in pursuit of a roe, and who were never able to find their way out. ‡

The Rev. John Hodgson, in his *History of Northumberland*, has told the story of the fairies of Rothley Mill, in the parish of Hartburn, Northumberland (part ii. vol. i. p. 305); both of his incidents have been transferred to Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., vol. i. p. 325, vol. iii. p. 48, the latter without any acknowledgment; and from this secondary source it appears in Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 313, under the title of "Ainsel." There are some original traits of the Northumbrian fairies in Mr. Robert White's introduction to "The Gloamyne Buchte, a ballad by James Telfer," in the *Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. pp.

* Dr. Bruce's *Wallet-Book of the Roman Wall*, p. 145.

† Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, part ii. vol. iii. pp. 411-412.

‡ Chatto's *Rambles in Northumberland*, p. 232.

130-138. Telfer's ballad, a fairy lay, is after the manner of the "Ettrick Shepherd," written in that absurd orthography which Hogg imagined to be old Scottish, which, to the degradation of the language, has unfortunately found a crowd of imitators.

Fairy Treasures at Bamborough.

There is a part of the rock on which Bamborough Castle stands only revealed to the lucky, where money is found, having been placed there by the fairies. Those who participate in their bounty may have it every time they visit the spot, but unless a silver coin is placed among it to secure it, it would slip away, as if it had never been. A certain lad got ever so much money there, but he had always to add to it a piece of genuine British coin, "to keep it whole," as the phrase went. An old man upwards of seventy told me, and he had had the account from his grandmother.

On Tweedside (North Durham), in some old pasture fields, there still remain the twisted ridges, like ever so many repetitions of the letter S, cast up by the plough, when oxen formed the draught. The flexure was to enable the oxen to wind out the furrows at the land's end without trampling on them; but the story is that it was a precaution against the malevolence of the fairies, who took a malicious pleasure in shooting their fatal bolts at the patient beasts of burden who tore up their grassy hillocks and recreation grounds, and that they aimed their arrows along the furrows, imagining them to be straight, but they were baffled by their being drawn crooked, and thereby fell wide of the mark. They were therefore called elf-furrows.

In the Tweed, near Kelso, there are some dangerous weills, or whirlpools, of which the more noted are the Maxwheill, the Big and Little Coble Holes. An old man, it must be upwards

of seventy years since, said he never went up the Chalkheugh, a high terrace overlooking "Tweed's fair river, broad and deep," "after dark," without seeing the fairies "dancing round the weils in the Coble Holes." *

An adventure with the fairies near Yetholm, which unfortunately breaks off abruptly, I find in the MS. of William Jackson, a native of Wooler, supplementary to his brother James Jackson's enumeration of the inhabitants of that place when he was a young man. It was written in 1837, and James Jackson was then seventy-four years old, and had been absent fifty-five or fifty-six years from Wooler, which affords the date of 1782. "My old schoolmistress, Stilty Mary (Mary Turnbull, who lived with her sister Isabel), had a brother whose name was Thomas. He occasionally came from Yetholm and resided with his sisters for a fortnight or three weeks. When Thomas was at Wooler the boys in passing used to shout, 'Peace be here till Thomas Turnbull, the king's toller, pass bye.' This was very annoying to the brother and sisters; and Thomas used sometimes to stand behind the door, with the sneck in his hand, and bolt out upon them, and if he caught hold of any of them the punishment was not so imaginary as the offence. The origin of the reproach was this. Their father was the collector of tolls at Yetholm. He had occasion to visit Edinburgh, and in coming home, a few miles before he reached the town, he came upon a large assemblage of fairies, dressed in green jackets and other splendid equipments, dancing upon a sunny brae to the sound of a great variety of musical instruments and drums. At this sight and sound old Thomas's horse stood 'right sore astonished,' and startled and curvetted in

* "Yet I have seen thee by the darkling stream,
Among the foam-bells deftly dancing."
J. Telfer, *To a Fairy.*

such a manner as to endanger its rider. In this emergency he bethought himself that the king's name might possess some authority, so he shouted out with all his might, 'Peace be here till Thomas Turnbull, the king's toller, pass bye.' The fairies were so much engaged with their sport that they had not observed him before; but on hearing the order, instead of obeying it, they came running in great——"

(*Cætera desunt.*)—The remainder cannot be recovered, but Thomas probably won the race that would ensue.

The Berwickshire fairies were either a quiet lot or they lived among a too matter-of-fact population, for their memorial has almost vanished. The banks of Fosterland Burn, a contributory to a morass called Billy Mire in the Merse, "were," says the late Mr. George Henderson, "a favourite haunt of the fairies in bygone days, and we once knew an old thresher or barnsman, David Donaldson by name, who, although he never saw any of those aerial beings, constantly maintained that he frequently heard their sweet music in the silence of the summer midnight by Fosterland Burn, by the banks of Ale Water, and on the broom-clad Pyper Knowes." In the last resort another authority asserts that "they used to come out from an opening in the side of the knowe, all beautifully clad in green, and a piper playing to them in the most enchanting strains." They once attempted, but failed, to abstract the shepherd's wife of little Billy when in childbed; and they were detected loosening Langton House from its foundations in order to set it down in an extensive morass called Dogden Moss, in the parish of Greenlaw, but were scared by the utterance of the holy name.* In one of Mr. Henderson's MSS. I also find that some curiously formed eminences on the

* Henderson's *Popular Rhymes of Berwickshire*, pp. 3, 70, 66, 67, 68.

banks of the Whitadder, near Hutton Mill, called the Cradle Knowes, were in old times a scene of revelry for the light-footed fairies.

The fairies of Greenlaw-dean used to hold a harmless midnight convention at the outlets of two drains called the Double Conduits, where there was a constant supply of pure fresh water to cool their thirst, after their mirthful exertions in footing it on the fine unbroken sward that there clothes the banks of the Blackadder.

A steep track, resembling a road, but apparently only a fracture in the strata, up a steep rock-face near Oldcambus, near Cockburnspath, is still called the Fairies' Road. Up this, from the glen beneath, the queen of faery, while still visible to mortals, was wont to drive in state at evening's close, "in her coach and six." It was the natural approach to a British camp, situated on a platform above.

A retired hollow, overgrown in summer with tall ferns, near the head of Billsdean Burn, East Lothian, is popularly known as the Fairies' O'on, or Oven, but has no legend attached to it.

The white-flowered *Linum catharticum*, or purging flax, which grows in natural pastures, is called by the shepherds in Berwickshire "Fairy Lint." It is supposed to furnish the fairy women with materials for their distaffs. [As I was the first to make known this name in Johnston's *Nat. His. East. Bor.*, p. 45, I protest against attempts made to explain that it is so-called "from its great delicacy."]

The foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) has in its name no connection with the fairy folks, but as I have noted elsewhere is from the A.S. foxesclife, foxesclofe, foxesglofe, foxesglove—the glove of the fox. The false etymology was, I believe, first advanced in Landsborough's *Arran*, p. 144; accepted by Dr. Johnston, *Nat. Hist. East. Bord.*, p. 157; and eagerly seized on since by popular writers.

When I was a boy the large flat stone on which the mistresses of households knocked their linen webs when bleaching, which lay beside the well at a farm-place in Berwickshire, had on its upper surface an excavation resembling a small female foot, which was reckoned to have been impressed by a fairy footstep. Another stone with a corresponding impression by which people crossed a miry part of a road leading to St. Helen's Church, Oldcambus, was regarded as a "Mermaid's Stone;" she having stepped on it (not being a conventional mermaid with fishy tail) when escaping from her mortal captor, whoever he was. These were natural concavities, the rock being of too indurated a character, viz. Silurian of the closest texture, to admit of being worked by the chisel. Footmarks cut in rocks, in the Celtic districts of Scotland and in Ireland, are indicative of the spot on which a chieftain or king was inaugurated by placing his foot in the depression. See a paper by Captain Thomas, R.N., "On Dunadd, Glassary, Argyleshire; the place of Inauguration of the Dalriadic Kings," in *The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 1878-9, pp. 28-47. In two instances cited it is connected with the fairies. "Mr. Jervise notes that a small undressed block of granite lies by the side of the mountain stream of the Turret in Glenesk, near Lord Dalhousie's shooting-lodge of Millden, and upon it the figure of a human foot, of small size, is very correctly and pretty deeply scooped out. This is called the 'fairy's footmark'" (p. 39). "About 1831, when the 'Fairy Knowe,' in the parish of Carmyllie, Forfarshire, was being reduced, or removed in the course of agricultural improvement, there was found, besides stone cists and a bronze ring, a rude boulder of about two tons' weight on the under side of which was scooped the representation of a human foot. Probably some distinguished chieftain had erected the tumulus, not only as a tomb for himself, but also as a place of inauguration whereon the engraved

stone, by which the right to rule was conveyed, was placed" (p. 38, on the authority of Kilkenny, *Arch. Jour.*, vol. v., p. 451; and Jervise's *Epitaphs*, p. 249).

Of an example of a "Fairy Knowe," popularly so called, at Stenton, near Dunbar, East Lothian, having likewise proved on being opened to be a tumulus, I obtained notice, in February, 1878, and also procured the whole of the articles discovered in the interior for examination. Till removed it appeared to be a smooth grassy mound, but on the surface layer of earth being stripped off it was found to consist mostly of stones and boulders. It contained a stone cist formed of sandstone slabs, enclosing a large baked clay urn, rudely ornamented with lattice work and with upright and horizontal lines, the mouth undermost, covering a few fragments of human bones. Along with the urn, a very artistically chipped flint knife, and a diminutive oblong sharpening stone of primitive clay slate—both fairy toys—appeared. All these articles belong to the Neolithic period.

It is true here, as all over the country:

> "Where the scythe cuts and the sock rives,
> Hae done wi' fairies and bee-bykes!"

Fairy and Wishing and Healing Wells.

Resort to the Fairy Well is still a favourite pastime in holiday times with young people at Wooler. They express a secret wish and drop in a crooked pin. Hence it is also called the Pin and Wishing Well. The well is situated in a narrow hollow among the lower Cheviots which rise above the town, and is formed out of a natural spring of pure and very cool water originating among rocks at the base of a high platform, which has been occupied in the olden time by a British camp, now known as the Maiden Camp (the Maiden Castle of Wallis). From its connection with the camp, or in compliment to the

spirit of the spring, its genuine name is said by the old people to be the "Maiden Well." * It is drained into an open ditch, and is at present too shallow to admit of children being dipped into it. Nor do I know that this has ever been practised here, but the old inhabitant who communicated some of this information was familiar with the formula incidental to such applications for healing purposes at sacred springs. The applicant having cried "Hey, how!" dipped in the weakly child, and before departure left a piece of bread and cheese as an offering. Sir Walter Scott, in his introduction to the *Tale of Tamlane*, refers to a spring upon the top of Minchmuir, a mountain in Peeblesshire, called the Cheese Well, "because, anciently, those who passed that way were wont to throw into it a piece of cheese as an offering to the fairies to whom it was consecrated." The fairies themselves practised such ablutions. Fletcher, in his *Faithful Shepherdess* tells us of—

> "A virtuous well, about whose flowery banks
> The nimble-footed fairies dance their rounds
> By the full moonshine, dipping oftentimes
> Their stolen children, so to make them free
> From dying flesh and dull mortality."

Mr. George Tate, in a notice of the Wooler Pin Well, mentions having heard that a procession was formed to visit the well on the morning of Mayday. This may have been so, but

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* Maiden, however, is a term appropriate to British or even Roman camps and ways. A terrace now in the centre of Wooler was formerly called the Maiden Knowe, and may have been once fortified. There is the Maiden Castle on Stanemoor; the Maiden Castle, an old earthern fortress, near Durham; the station of Caer-vorran, from the Welsh Caer-vorwyn, the Maiden Castle near the Maiden-way; Edinburgh is the Castra Puellarum. See note in Hodgson's *History of Northumberland*, vol. iii. p. 136.

on inquiry I could not find any tradition of such a circumstance. It was natural that those who went to gather May-dew should proceed to the well, being on the nearest open common. Madron Well, in Cornwall, on a May morning is visited by groups of young girls desirous of knowing when they were to be married. "Two pieces of straw about an inch long were crossed and the pin run through them. The cross was then dropped into the water and the rising bubbles carefully counted, as they marked the number of years which would pass ere the arrival of the happy day." The practice also prevailed at a well near St. Austell. "On approaching the well each visitor is expected to throw in a crooked pin, and, if you are lucky, you may possibly see the other pins rising from the bottom to meet the more recent offering." *

The "Worm Well" at Lambton, co. Durham, had formerly a cover and an iron ladle. "Half a century ago it was in repute as a wishing well, and was one of the scenes dedicated to the usual festivities and superstitions of Midsummer Eve. A crooked pin (the usual tribute of the 'wishers') may sometimes be still discovered, sparkling amongst the clear gravel of the bottom of its basin." † A well of directly the opposite character, Ffynnon Elian, the Cursing Well, is referred to in Mr. Halliwell's *Excursions in North Wales*, pp. 63-65. "Various ceremonies are gone through on the occasion; amongst others, the name of the devoted is registered in a book—a pin in his name and a pebble with his initials inscribed thereon are thrown into the well. When the curse is to be removed the ceremonies are to a certain extent reversed, such as erasing the name from the book, taking up the pebble, with several other practices of a superstitious character."

* Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 295.

† Sir C. Sharp's *Bishoprick Garland*, p. 23.

I had written thus much when I received from my friend Mr. Thomas Arkle, Highlaws, Morpeth, an account of a "wishing well" at Keyheugh, in the parish of Elsdon, Northumberland, which has remained hitherto unnoticed. "In the parish of Elsdon," writes Mr. Arkle, "about a mile south of Midgey Ha', on a steep hill called Darden, is a perpendicular precipice of freestone rock, which is a striking object from the Elsdon and Rothbury road, at a point a little to the east of Graslees Mill. The rocky face extends to a considerable length, the greatest height being about sixty feet. On the southern or higher side the ground is level with the top of the cliff, whilst below a large area is covered with detached fragments of rock of all sizes, scattered about in the wildest confusion, the whole place presenting clear indications of the tremendous power of glacial action.

"Such is the wild and romantic place called Keyheugh, which, though now lonely and deserted, was in olden times the attractive Sunday resort of the young people resident in the neighbourhood. At a little distance from the main precipice is a well, on the bottom of which, centuries ago, might always have been observed a number of pins; or, as my informant, who had visited the place in his youthful days, expressed himself, 'a heap of pins,' each visitor dropping in one to further the fulfilment of wishes silently breathed over the magic fountain."

The Rev. G. Rome Hall, in a very interesting account of "Modern Survivals of Ancient Well Worship in North Tynedale," in the *Arch. Æliana*, n.s., vol. viii. pp. 60-87, refers to some of the fountains in the district to which votive offerings were presented, either in the present age or the past. Some of these wells had healing attributes, others conferred prosperity, or led to pleasant anticipations that would ultimately terminate in a course of action which would obtain the object desired.

Over several of these wells saints had obtained the guardianship, the native deities being deposed. The Halliwell, in the parish of Chollerton, a chalybeate spring in a burn of the same name, on Gunnerton Fell, has for a long time drawn numerous votaries to its healing waters. In the village of Colwell, in the same parish, the well, on or about Midsummer Sunday, used to be dressed with flowers, as was customary with other wells elsewhere in England on certain holidays.

Into the village wells at Wark, at New Year tide, the first visitant was wont to cast in as an offering flowers, grass, hay, or straw. The Birtley Haly Well was till recently visited on "fine Sunday afternoons in summer, and itinerant vendors of refreshments from the village, which is about a mile distant, were wont to be present on the spot." But the chief well for pilgrimage in North Tynedale seems to have been the Bore Well on Erring Burn, near Bingfield, which is strongly impregnated with sulphur. "On the Sunday following the 4th day of July," says Mr. Hall, "that is, about Midsummer day, according to the old style, great crowds of people used to assemble here from all the surrounding hamlets and villages. The scene has been described to me as resembling a fair, stalls for the sale of various refreshments being brought from a distance year by year at the summer solstice. The neighbouring slopes had been terraced, and seats formed for the convenience of pilgrims and visitors. One special object of female pilgrims was, I am informed, to pray at the well, or express a silent wish as they stood over it for the cure of barrenness. . . . . If the pilgrim's faith were sufficient, her wish at the Bore Well would be certain to be fulfilled within the twelve months. . . . . A very considerable number of visitors, with tents and purchasable commodities, assembled even this last year to celebrate the old Midsummer Sunday at the Bore Well." This festival was called "Bore Well Sunday." Our Lady's Wells, or the Holy Wells, on the

banks of the Hart, near Longwitton, as related by Mr. Hodgson in his *Hist. of Northumberland*, of which the easternmost was termed the Eye Well, attracted a great concourse of people from all parts, in memory of the old people, on Midsummer Sunday and the Sunday following, who amused themselves with leaping, eating gingerbread brought for sale to the spot, and drinking the waters of the well. A tremendous dragon, whom Guy of Warwick slew, once guarded the fountains.*

Within Mr. Hall's recollection there was a yearly pilgrimage to Gilsland Wells on the Sunday after old Midsummer Day called the "Head Sunday," and the Sunday after it. "Hundreds, if not thousands, used to assemble there from all directions by rail, when that was availabe, and by vehicles or on foot otherwise."

In the copious well of St. Ninian at Holystone, near Alwinton, also called "Our Lady's Well," Dr. Embleton of Newcastle on one occasion observed at the bottom many pins lying as votive offerings. There was a holy well of great repute called St. Mary's Well at Jesmond that had supposed healing properties, and the Rag Well at Benton was also famous, where the votaries left fragments of their garments attached to the trees and bushes growing near the sacred fountain. At the well of Venerable Bede, at Monkton near Jarrow, in Brand's time, "as late as 1740 it was a prevailing custom to bring children troubled with any infirmity, and a crooked pin was put in, and the well laved dry between each dipping. Twenty children were brought together on a Sunday to be dipped in this well, and at Midsummer Eve there was a great resort of the

* The Rev. John Horsley (*Materials for a Hist. of Northumberland*, p. 9) says, "They have a story concerning a dragon at Thornton Wells," which are in the vicinity of Longwitton. They were mineral waters.

neighbouring people (Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, i. p. 383 (note), and *Hist. of Newcastle*, vol. ii. p. 54). In the *Picture of Newcastle* it is added that the concourse at the summer solstice was attended with "bonefires, music, dancing, and other rural sports," but that these customs had been discontinued before 1812, although people then alive remember to have seen great numbers of infirm and diseased children dipped in expectation of their being restored to health.

Quite recently Mr. Hall was told by an eye-witness at Riccarton Junction of a man from that district of Liddesdale who had taken the journey by the railway to St. Boswell's for the purpose of visiting a Holy Well. His offering was a farthing, and he returned home in full faith that the cure of a near relative suffering from cancer would be effected by the application of the simple lotion.

Mr. Hall gives a number of other illustrations from other districts, for which I refer to his paper; and he inquires whether the accumulation of Roman coins and other relics in Coventina's Well at Procolitia, on the Roman Wall, may not have been in part propitiatory, and connected with well-worship.

The Hazelrigg Dunnie.

In crossing Belford Moor, by the upper road leading to Wooler, there are several projecting rocky eminences of sandstone overlooking the valley, where Lyham, Holburn, Cheesham in the Grange, and two farms called Hazelrigg lie. Several of the more conspicuous rocks bear names, such as Cockenheugh Crags, Collierheugh Crags, Bounder's or Bowden doors Crags, Sma' Crag, and Jack's (Jack Daw) Crags.

In former times, and it may be so still, these heights were frequented by a mischievous being, or rather spirit, called the Hazelrigg Dunnie. Dunnie is reputed to have been a petty

reiver of olden time who hoarded his gear in the crags, which contain several cavernous receptacles adapted for concealment. On one occasion, however, he was surprised by the people of Hazelrigg in the granary robbing corn, and sacrificed to their vengeance. He was loath to die, for it took "a the folks o' Hazelrigg" to kill him. This event happened "lang syne." His ghost, however, has haunted the place ever since. His pranks seem to lie chiefly in frightening the children and rustics of the village, and to be somewhat akin to those of the Hedley Cow. Often in the morning when the ploughman has caught his horse (as he thinks) in the field and brought him home and yoked him with fitting care, he will be horror-stricken to see the harness come slap to the ground just as he has finished; while his tractable brute, never guilty of such pranks, is already beheld afar off, kicking up his heels and scouring across the country like the wind. According to other accounts Dunnie (as his name imports) was a Brownie, and created uproar in mornings by an upturn of furniture. He also was general exchanger of babies between the fairies and thoughtless good wives, and was particularly on the alert when the midwife came, sometimes substituting himself for the horse that brought her and landing both her and her conductor in a morass, taking precious care that "Dun" at least should not be "in the mire."

This is a sample of Dunnie's mischief. At other times his dim form is seen about the Crags, apparently bewailing the loss of his buried treasure. This is inferred from his constantly repeating the rhyme given subsequently, whence the natives believe that they could soon be rich enough—if they only knew how.

My friend Mr. W. B. Boyd, writing to me from Hetton Hall, of date 1st October, 1860, says, "The other day, on examining an old map of South Hazelridge, I found the crag running almost parallel with the Dancing Green Knowe, which

is on North Hazelridge, but on the opposite side of the march, is called Collier (or Coller) braes; possibly the Collier-heugh of the rhyme. A little further along on the south side of the road to Belford is a crag called Bowden Doors, of which, I think, the word Bownders must be a contraction. They lie within half a mile of each other."

Still more recently, in passing a quarry before coming to Hazelrigg, Mr. B. pointed out the steepest part, and said that it was there that Dunnie sometimes used to hang over his legs, when he took an airing at night. During high winds a peculiar loud singing and changeable sound about one of the windows of the farmhouse of North Hazelrigg perplexed the inmates, who attributed it to Dunnie. On a careful examination it was perceived to be caused by a piece of paper, fixed in the top of the window, which the wind had converted into an Æolian harp. Allan Ramsay in some verses, "Spoken to Æolus, in the house of Marlefield (Roxburghshire), on the night of a violent wind," actually compares the noise occasioned to that of the action of a "kow."

> "Say, wherefore makes thou all this din,
> In dead of night?—hech! like a kow
> To puff at winnocks, and cry 'Wow!'"

The story of Dunnie I got from a herd-boy, who came to me when one day I was resting, within view of all the places mentioned; the rest of his character was known to an old man of the district whom I questioned. It has appeared in Mr. Denham's tracts, but I replace it here with additional remarks. Mr. Henderson (*Folklore of the Northern Counties*, pp. 263, 270) compares Dunnie with the "Picktree Brag," &c., of which he gives a pretty full account. In the notes to Thomas Wilson's *Pitman's Pay*, there are particulars of another Brag of the kind, which I feel bound to cite, that it may be preserved in its appropriate place.

Mr. Wilson has been speaking of the witches of Gateshead Fell, and their good treatment compared with those of Newcastle, as they "were allowed full liberty to go where they pleased, in what shape they pleased, and in what way was most agreeable to themselves, either to scud over our hills in the shape of a hare or whisk through the air on a broomstick." * One of these, old Nell Bland, was "the only real witch we had on the Low Fell." Going to the pit to meet "Awd Nell and Cuddy's swine,"

"Twee varry far fra sonsy things,"

made the workmen "on the look out through the day for some untoward event." †

Mabel was another of those old wives whose repute was none of the best.

"The highly-gifted race of 'witches,'" says Mr. Wilson, "seems rapidly tending toward extinction. There are here and there yet to be seen the remains of their weak and degenerate descendants, but in such a feeble and feckless state as hardly to deserve the name. I have known one of these poor creatures many years ago whose power never extended further than raising a wind to blow off the roof of her neighbour's cottage or shake his standing corn. I am aware that she was accused of more serious mischiefs; but how far these ill-natured accusations were true is very difficult to say, for I could never discern anything about Mabel that would warrant them, for she was neither deformed nor ugly, nor did I ever recognise her frisking about in any other shape than her own. In some other respects, however, she was rather a singular woman. She had a memory that retained the date of every event that had taken place for some miles round the place

* Page 74. † Pages 20, 23.

where she lived. She could give you the day and hour of all the births and deaths in the neighbourhood during her time. She knew exactly who 'came again,' as she called it, after suffering violent deaths, either in coal-pits or elsewhere; what shape they were in (for they did not always appear in their own), and what they said when they could be prevailed upon to speak, what it was that brought them back, and how long it was before the priest or some such competent person got them laid at rest in their graves. All the haunted houses or places she had off by rote, and could have given you the names of all the 'uncanny folk,' or such as had 'bad een,' and had amused themselves by plaguing their credulous neighbours.

"Poor Mabel has been dead many years. She was in the habit of amusing her young auditors with the birth and parentage of 'Dick the Deevil,' who frequently rode over the Black Fell to his work upon the 'Porto Bello Brag,' a kind of wicked sprite that was well known in that part of the neighbourhood. The description of the 'Pelton Brag' (Picktree, in the vicinity of Pelton), given by Sir Cuthbert Sharp in his *Bishoprick Garland*, induces me to believe that it must have been the same roguish sprite that played such tricks at Porto Bello. As the places are only a few miles distant, it is possible that he might extend the sphere of his antics to the latter place when he was not particularly busy at home. If they were not the same they were evidently, from the similarity of their habits, from one common stock. It delighted in mischief, and whoever mounted it (for it always appeared in the shape of an ass) were sure to be thrown into some bog or whin-bush at parting, when the creature, as if enjoying the mischief, would run off, 'nickerin' and laughin',' as Dick would say. He had put the assmanship of many to the test, but none were able to sit him whenever he had arrived at a suitable place for depositing his load—not even Dick, who had become a favourite, and who in the end was

the only one who had spirit enough to cross him. Dick, however, from long practice, had a pretty good idea whereabouts he would be laid, and, from being on his guard, very seldom received an injury. The case was often very different with others, who had not his precaution, or were not such favourites as Dick, who was generally accommodated with a soft fall."*

For another version of the Hazelrigg Dunnie, derived equally with my own from traditionary sources, I am indebted to Mrs. Culley, of Fowberry Tower, which contains a few additional particulars.

The ghost known as "Hazelrigg Dunny" is said to be that of a reiver, which takes the occasional form of a dun-coloured horse or pony, and frequents a cave on the side of Cockenheugh, near Hazelrigg, called the Cuddie's Cove. He had, according to a tradition contained in the following old rhyme, lost a great treasure, which he had no doubt buried in the neighbourhood of Cockenheugh :—

In Collier heugh there's gear eneugh,
In Cocken heugh there's mair,
But I've lost the keys of Bowden Doors,
I'm ruined for evermair."

The two first-mentioned places are tracts of moorland, and the "Bowden Doors" is a craggy mass of rock near Lyham.

Var.—"For I've lost the key o' the Bowden Doors."

"In the infernal regions," says Hans Anderson, "misers stand and lament that they had forgotten the keys of their money chests."

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* *Pitman's Pay*, p. 75, note.

A favourite haunt of the "Dunny" is Fowberry Bridge, and he is even said to pay a visit now and then to Fowberry Tower.

A few words as to the Cuddie's Cove. Cuddie is a corruption of the word Cuthbert, and an older and more beautiful tradition than that of the "Dunny" assigns the Cuddie's or Cuthbert's Cove on Cocken Heugh as an occasional resting place of the famous St. Cuthbert when, as Bishop of Lindisfarne, he used to make journeys through his diocese.

It is told to Dunnie's credit that, if supper plates were not washed up overnight, the Dunny came and washed them; whether he was a sympathiser with tired or lazy people, or whether he did not like plates to be long dirty, tradition deponeth not.

Apparitions.

In Murray's *Traveller's Guide for Northumberland*, pp. 161, 162, it is said: "Chillingham till lately had its Radiant Boy; Hazelrigg, the goblin called Dunnie; Brinkburn, a terrible monk; Cresswell, a lady who starved herself to death in its old tower; Wallington, its headless lady; and Willington, another lady of awful aspect." Of several of these I have not traced the history, but I find the "radiant boy" again at Corby Castle, the seat of one of the branches of the Howard family, lying on the Eden, near Carlisle. Mr. Fraser Tytler, the historian of Scotland, visited Corby Castle, November 8th, 1840, of which he thus writes to his sister: "The whole place is redolent of feudal antiquity, with a fine gallery of old portraits, an old library, and (as you know) a ghost; but I have come away without seeing the radiant boy of Corby. This was extraordinary, for I had to walk to my bedroom every night through a long dark gallery of which you could not see the termination, with old warriors frowning on me, and the moon streaming in through the Gothic window at the end—circumstances which

one would have thought any well-conditioned ghost would have profited by."—Burgon's *Memoir of P. F. Tytler*, p. 300.

A lady writes me: "There is a ghost at Painters' Gate, near Fowberry, situated close to the cross roads between Wooler and Chatton, Fowberry and Lilburn. The ghost here is said to be a man on a dun-coloured horse. Another instance of a ghost of this kind is at the cross roads at Lilburn, where a man riding with his head under his arm and a lady wringing her hands are said to be seen."

A ghost used to frequent Weetwood Sandy Lane, and also Weetwood Bridge and the road approaching it from Wooler. If I remember right, some unhappy being "put away with himself," or committed suicide, somewhere thereabouts.

Rev. Matthew Culley, writes: "The village of Humbleton, not far from Wooler, where the famous battle was fought in 1403, is haunted by a ghost (of what sex I know not) in the form of a hare, which is hunted sometimes by the Wooler and Humbleton people—but is never killed."

The Rev. John Horsley in his *Materials for a History of Northumberland* (1729-30), says, p. 9: "Adam Crisp, who lived at Crawley Dean, is said to have had encounters with an apparition there. They talk also of his going to London and coming back in forty-eight hours. Mr. Punshon told me that Crisp had sent to him about the apparition. On the 4th of July, 1728, when I was at Piercebridge, in my tour, the people told me of a stone coffin which had been converted into a swine trough, but the people who had done this were so haunted and disturbed that they were glad to return it to its former place."

Mr. Sidney Gibson, in his *Memoir on Northumberland*, 1st ed., p. 36, states that "the ruins of a mansion of the Orde family, built at a place called Sandy Bank, is attributed to a ghost of such terrific character as to have rendered it uninhabitable."

Dudley Brechan's Ghost.

The spirit of Dudley Brechan haunted the "Big House," on the Tenter's Hill, a bulky, red-tiled, and white-washed mansion, one of a row built on a ridge, where the dyers of Wooler were wont in former days to stretch their webs to dry. It is an old story, with its details lost. When the ghost paid its evening visits, its descent was like a "meikle cupple" falling with a crash on the ceiling. Many a "gliff" the folk got; but beyond frightening them it perpetrated no other mischief.

When people wakened and looked out early in the morning, they would have seen a carriage coming up the main street of the town, drawn by black horses, on its way to the churchyard. No one living at Wooler knew anything of "Dudley Brechan." *

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* There is a notice of the Brechans or Brechams or Brighams, in the MS. of the brothers Jackson, of date as far back as 1782. John Brecham lived then in Ramsay's Lane, as a dyer, and valued himself for dyeing "a good bright yellough," as he pronounced the word yellow. He was supposed, from his dialect, to be from Aberdeenshire. "He was a great *peaferer*, often complaining of little to do and consequent poverty. My father when living in Stein Laidley's house, had a frequent visit of Johnnie, when working by candlelight. Knowing John's weakness he used occasionally to provide a shilling's worth of halfpence, which he put in a leathern purse and shook at him, when he came in. 'Aye weel-a-wat, Andrew, ye get it aw; ye have aye plenty and ma share o' the siller is very sma.' I have often heard it remarked that old people, though very feeble when they began harvest work, revived greatly in a few days. I remember gathering upon Horsden (a cultivated hill face above Wooler) after the shearers. I was sitting near Jenny Brecham, John's wife, at dinner time, when she made this remark to one of her neighbours: 'And for instance,' said she, 'there's our Johnnie, when he came first out he could scarcely step over a strae, and now he's as canty as a kale-worm.'" This pair may have been relatives of Dudley, for I can gather that they had a family.

It was recollected that a suicide, "one who put down himself," was buried at the churchyard gate of that place.

Willy Wabby's Ghost.

Willy Wabby's (Walby's) ghost, which once gained great notoriety, was contrived by a person who wished to get possession of a "big house," called Lark Hall, near Burrowdon, about the year 1800. The plates and other crockery came dancing off the shelf on to the floor. People going into the house would suddenly have a pot or other utensil clapped on the crown of their head, or be liable to have some other diverting cantrip played on them. The country folks used to flock from a far way off to witness or get the news of the droll proceedings. There are full particulars in Mackenzie's *History of Northumberland*, ii., note, p. 42, but this reference to it is traditionary.

Andrew Bates, who was curate of St. John's Church, Newcastle, from 1689 to 1710, was much employed in exorcising houses reputed to be haunted. I remember his son, Ulric Bates, living 1763. Bates was celebrated in particular for laying, as they stated it, the ghost of one Barbara Cay, wife of a Mr. Cay, a Presbyterian of fortune and reputation in Newcastle, after all the Presbyterian ministers had failed.—*Credat Judæus* (Spearman's MSS.).

White Ladies.

The White Lady was either akin to the ghost or the spirit of a fountain. A wood between Yeavering and Akeld, which is nothing more than a strip of modern planting, is haunted by a "White Lady," who appears to walk there during the night to frighten people. The White Lady near Whittingham, in

Northumberland, had some connection with a well close to the River Aln above that village, situated at the Lee or Lea-side. The well goes by the name of the Lady Well or Lady's Well. "The Legend of the White Lady of Blenkinsopp" is told in Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., iii. pp. 144-148 (by William Pattison and G. B. Richardson).* At Detchant, near Belford, is what was named to me a "Cattle Well,"† which was frequented by a White Lady. I could ascertain nothing more of her from the old man, who had heard of it in his youth. Detchant, he told me, was wont to be a lonely place, and was infamous for robberies committed near it.

For the following account of a White Lady who haunts Coupland Castle on the River Glen, I am indebted to Rev. Matthew Culley, and I give it in his words. His letter is dated August 17th, 1880:

"According to a tradition, one of the rooms, a large and gloomy apartment, in the oldest part of this castle (Coupland) is haunted by a ghost in the shape of a 'White Lady.'

"As to who she is, wherefore she appears, or when she first appeared, tradition is silent; but it is certain that half a century ago the 'haunted room' at Coupland had as 'uncanny' a reputation as it has at present. Within my own memory, and indeed quite recently, strange phenomena have been witnessed, and many unaccountable sounds, such as wailing voices, knockings, &c., have been heard at night by persons sleeping in the haunted

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* Mr. Denham told me that William Pattison, who contributed several papers to the *Table Book*, went to London, and it was believed died there. G. B. Richardson emigrated to Australia or New Zealand.

† Perhaps cattle drank at it. On Wooler Common there was a well of this description called "The Neatherd's Well," a neatherd being employed in charge of the townspeople's cows.

room and in rooms close by; whilst during the last six or seven years the White Lady herself is said positively to have been seen on more than one occasion."

The Death of Jean Gordon.

The Gipsies, or Faas, from its proximity to their head-quarters at Yetholm, greatly frequented Wooler, especially at the two fairs, which offered excellent opportunities for the disposal of their wares. On one of these statute anniversaries one of the Faas stole a pair of shoes from a stall. The towns-people, although some ascribed the ill-deed to the country folks, broke out and carried the culprit to the mill-dam, which branching off from Wooler water flows along the bottom of the high bank on which the town is situated, and ducked her there till she was next to dead among their hands. One of them had gone so far as to set his foot on her to keep her down. When the excitement subsided down she was drawn out, all be-draggled with slime, and laid on a high stone on the wooded bank above the mill-lead; but she was too far gone for recovery, and gave only a gasp or two and died. "Old William Bolam," who was once a schoolmaster in the place, and who died in the workhouse several years since, recollected seeing her in that deplorable condition, and how before removal the mud had to be washed from her clothes and body. The Gipsies never forgot this barbarous outrage, and vowed revenge; and hence a constant watch had to be kept on their movements for many years, to prevent their taking similar "wild justice," for this wicked maltreatment of one of the clan. Within memory the townspeople used to live in dread of them. The woman's name was Jean Gordon, and she was married to a Faa.* She was a relative of the famous Jean Gordon, who was equally cruelly

* The Falls (pronounced Faas) belonged to the family of the King of the Yetholm Gipsies.

drowned by the mob at Carlisle. Till this day, whenever a continuance of bad weather is experienced at the little town at the foot of the Cheviots, old superstitious people say, "That's a cloud for the death o' Jean Gordon," or, "A race of bad weather will always hang over Wooler for the death o' Jean Gordon, drowned in the mill-dam."

Silky—A Northumbrian Tradition.

"O wha wad buy a silken gown,
Wi' a poor broken heart."
Scots' Song.

Eighty or ninety years ago the inhabitants of the quiet village of Black Heddon, near Stamfordham, and of the country round about, were greatly annoyed by the pranks of a preternatural being called Silky. This name it had obtained from its manifesting a predilection to make itself visible in the semblance of a female dressed in silk. Many a time, when any of the more timorous of the community had a night journey to perform, have they unawares and invisibly been dogged by this spectral tormentor, who, at the dreariest part of the road, the most suitable for thrilling surprises, would suddenly break forth in dazzling splendour. If the person happened to be on horseback, a sort of exercise for which she evinced a strong partiality, she would unexpectedly seat herself behind, "rattling in her silks." There, after enjoying a comfortable ride, with instantaneous abruptness she would, like a thing destitute of continuity, dissolve away and become incorporated with the nocturnal shades, leaving the bewildered horseman in blank amazement.

At Belsay, some two or three miles from Black Heddon, she had a favourite resort. This was a romantic crag finely studded with trees, under the gloomy umbrage of which, "like one for-

lorn," she loved to wander all the live-long night. Here often has the belated peasant beheld her dimly through the sombre twilight, as if engaged in splitting great stones, or hewing with many a stroke some stately "monarch of the grove." And while he thus stood, and gazed, and listened to intimations, impossible to be misapprehended, of the dread reality of that mysterious being, concerning whom so various conjectures were awake, all at once, excited by that wondrous agency, he would have heard the howling of a resistless tempest rushing through the woodland—the branches creaking in violent concussion—or rent into fragments by the impetuous fury of the blast—while to the eye not a leaf was seen to quiver, nor a pensile spray to bend.

"All was delusion, nought was truth."

The bottom of this crag is washed by a picturesque lake or fish-pond, at whose outlet is a waterfall, over which a venerable tree, sweeping its umbrageous arms, adds impressiveness to the scene. Amid the complicated limbs of this tree Silky possessed a rude chair, where she was wont, in her moody moments, to sit—wind-rocked—enjoying the rustling of the storm in the dark woods, or the gush of the cascade as it ascended with spirit-like fitfulness, during the pauses of the gale. It is due to the present proprietor, Sir Charles M. L. Monck, Bart., of Belsay Castle, to state that the tree so consecrated in the sympathies and the terrors of the vicinity has been carefully preserved. Though now no longer tenanted by its aerial visitant, it yet spreads majestically its time-hallowed canopy over the spot, awakening in the lore-versed rustic when the winter's wind raves gusty and sonorous through its leafless boughs, the soul-harrowing recollection of the exploits of the ancient fay; but in the springtide beautiful with the full-flushed verdure of that exuberant season, and recipient of the kindling

emotions of reverence and affection. It still bears the name of "Silky's seat," in memory of its once wonderful occupant.

Silky exercised a marvellous influence over the brute creation. Horses, which possess a discernment of spirits superior to man, at least are more sharp-sighted in the dark, were in an extraordinary degree sensitive of her presence and control. She seems to have had a perverse pleasure in arresting these poor defenceless animals while engaged in their labours. When this misfortune occurred, there was no remedy brute force could devise; expostulation, soothing, whipping, and kicking were all exerted in vain to make the restive beast resume the proper direction. The ultimate resource, unless it might be her whim to revoke the spell, was the magic-dispelling witch-wood (mountain ash), which was of unfailing efficacy. One poor wight, a farm servant, was once the selected victim of her frolics. He had to go to a colliery at some distance for coals, and it was late in the evening before he could return. Silky waylaid him at a bridge, a "ghastly, ghost-alluring edifice," since called "Silky's Brig," lying a little to the south of Black Heddon, on the road between that place and Stamfordham. Just as he had reached "the height of that bad eminence," the keystone, horses and cart became fixed and immoveable as fate. And in that melancholy plight might both man and horses have continued—quaking, and sweating, and stock-still—till the morning light had thrown around them its mantle of protection, had not a neighbouring servant come up to the rescue, who opportunely carried some of the potent witchwood about his person. On the arrival of this seasonable aid, the perplexed driver rallied his scattered senses, and the helpless animals being duly seasoned after the fashion prescribed on such occasions, he had the heartfelt satisfaction of seeing them apply themselves with alacrity to the draught; and in a short time both he and the coals reached home in safety. Ever afterwards, however,

as long as he lived, he took the precaution of rendering himself spell-proof, by being furnished with a quantity of witch-wood, by no means being disposed that Silky should a second time amuse herself at his expense and that of his team.

She was capricious and wayward. Sometimes she installed herself in the office of that old familiar Lar, Brownie, but with characteristic misdirection, in a manner exactly the reverse of that useful species of hobgoblin. And here it may be remarked, that throughout her disembodied career, she can scarcely be said to have performed one benevolent action for the sake of its moral qualities. She had, from first to last, a latent hankering for mischief, and gloried in withering surprises and unforeseen movements. As is customary with that "sturdy fairy," as he is designated by the great English Lexicographer (1), her works were performed at night, or between the hours of sunset and daydawn. If the good old dames had thoroughly cleaned their houses, which country people make a practice of doing, especially on Saturdays, so that they may have a comfortable and decent appearance on Sunday, after they had retired to rest Silky would silently have turned everything topsy-turvy, and the morning presented a scene of indescribable confusion. On the contrary if the house had been left in a disorderly state, a plan which they generally found best to adopt, everything would have been arranged with the greatest nicety.

At length a term had arrived to her erratic course, and both she and the peaceably disposed inhabitants whom she disquieted obtained the repose so long mutually desired. She abruptly disappeared. It had long been surmised by those who paid attention to those dark matters, that she was the troubled phantom of some person who had died very miserable in consequence of having great treasure, which before being overtaken

(1) *Journey to the Western Islands*, p. 171.

by her mortal agony had not been disclosed, and on that account she could not lie still in her grave! About the period referred to a domestic servant, being alone in one of the rooms of a house at Black Heddon, was frightfully alarmed by the ceiling above suddenly giving way, and something quite black and uncouth falling from it with a clash upon the floor. The servant did not stay an instant to examine it, but at once fled to her mistress screaming at the pitch of her voice, "The deevil's in the house! The deevil's in the house! He's come through the ceiling!" With this terrible announcement the whole family were convoked, and great was the consternation at the idea of the foe of mankind being amongst them in a visible form; and a considerable time elapsed before any one could brace up courage to face "the enemy," or be prevailed to go and inspect the cause of alarm. At last the mistress, who happened to be the most stout-hearted, ventured into the room, when instead of the personage on account of whom such awful apprehensions were entertained, a great dog or calf's skin lay on the floor, sufficiently black and uncomely, but filled with *gold*. After this Silky was never more heard or seen. Her destiny was accomplished—her spirit laid—and she now sleeps with her ancestors as peacefully and unperturbed as do the degenerate and unenterprising ghosts of modern days.

Mr. Robert Robson of Sunderland, county of Durham, communicated rough notes whence this sketch has been composed. Another informant states that the house wherein this occurred was at the time occupied by the Hepples, respectable yeomen at the place, whose descendants are yet the proprietors, and who, it is said, acquired a considerable sum from Silky's long hidden treasure so unexpectedly brought to light. This has been imputed to many other prosperous men besides Mr. Hepple, and not unfrequently in a spirit of envy. Stephen Cochran, of Clippens, in Renfrewshire, presented his relative, Wm. Cock-

burn, of Caldoun, the ancestor of the Dundonald family, with a large sum of money (it was said a *skinful*) for his good offices in freeing him from a malignant charge of witchcraft, and this was acknowledged by Thomas, the eighth earl, to have been the foundation of the family (2). We are told by an old authority that "to labour and to be content with that a man hath is a sweet life; but he that findeth a treasure is above them both" (3).

Some points of folklore may be here illustrated. Trees that stretch their long arms across waterfalls, and flourish by maintaining a perpetual struggle with the powers of nature amidst elemental commotion, supply, it would appear, fit roosting places for the spirits of darkness, and the ominous birds concerned in their malpractices.

"The heron came from the witch-pule tree,"

sings James Telfer; and likewise Sir Walter Scott,

"Where o'er the cataract the oak
Lay slant, was heard the raven's croak."

In Barskeogh Wood, near Dalry, on the water of Ken, in Galloway, "the clachan witches held their midnight revels by the light of the hunter's moon; and the famed sister of Lowran Burn proudly rode on the branches of the forest ash that overhangs the roaring linn of Earlston; while the young noviciates in the mysteries of witchcraft merrily danced in the bosom of the pool beneath, amid the white spray of the dashing stream." Fairies, too, as Burns tells us, delight

"to stray and rove
Among the rocks and streams;"

(2) Mitchell and Dickie's *Philosophy of Witchcraft*, p. 386. Paisley, 1839.

(3) *Ecclesiasticus*, c. xl. v. 18.

and there has been heard amid the darkness "plitch platching as it were o' some hundreds o' little feet i' the stream; when a' at yince the plitch-platching gae owre, and there was sic a queer eiry nicker, as o' some hundreds o' creatures laughin' cam frae the upper linn" (4). An old man in Wales had "often seen the fairies at waterfalls; particularly at that of Sewyd yr Rhyd in Cwm Pergwm, Vale of Neath, where a road runs between the fall and the rock. As he stood behind the fall they appeared in all the colours of the rainbow, and their music mingled with the noise of the water" (5). The celebrated fall of the Liffey, in Ireland, near Ballymore Eustace, is named Pool-a-Phooka, or Puck's Hole (6). "The Russians believe in a species of water and wood maids called Rusalki. They are of a beautiful form, with long green hair; they swing and balance themselves on the branches of trees, bathe in lakes and rivers, play on the surface of the water, and wring their locks on the green meads at the water's edge" (7).

The power of evoking a magic tempest, which was only

> "an enchanted show
> With which the eyes mote have deluded been,"

is one of the attributes of the beings not of this world. For thus Oberon attempted to deter Huon of Bordeaux from proceeding through the enchanted forest which offered the shortest passage to Babylon. "For before you have left the wood he will cause it so to rain on you, to blow, to hail, and to make such right marvellous storms that you will think the world is going to end." But this was "nothing but a phantom and enchant-

(4) R. White in Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. 137.
(5) Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 417.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 371.
(7) *Ibid.*, p. 491, from Grimm.

ments" that the dwarf made (8). When the vicar of Dean Prior's (Devon) is about to lay a ghost in a deep hollow at the foot of a waterfall, called the Hound's Pool, as they enter the wooded valley, "it seemed as if all the trees in the wood 'were coming together,' so great was the wind" (9). It is said that the walls of Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire, had stood for seven years and a day, wall-wide, waiting for the arrival of True Tammas (Thomas the Rhymer) to pronounce their fate. "At length he suddenly appeared before the fair building, accompanied by a violent storm of wind and rain, which stripped the surrounding trees of their leaves and shut the castle gates with a loud crash. But while the tempest was raging on all sides, it was observed that, close by the spot where Thomas stood, there was not wind enough to shake a pile of grass or move a hair of his head" (10).

Silk, as a spirit-raiment, has had a strong charm for the popular mind, perhaps from its cleanliness being associated, like the snowy robe of the ghost, with ideas of purity and innocence; or from its leaf-like *fissle* being judged akin to the tiptoe movement of unhappy souls. Dr. Dee's Ariel was "a spiritual creature, like a pretty girl of seven or nine years of age, attired on her head, with her hair rolled up before and hanging down behind, with a gown of silk, of changeable red and green, and with a train" (11).* Mr. Campbell, in his *Highland Tales*, vol. ii. p. 192, states that the miller's wife at Loch Nigdal, near

(8) Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 39.
(9) *Folklore*, N. and Q., p. 223.
(10) Chambers' *Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 8.
(11) Mackay's *Popular Delusions*, i. p. 157.

* Cowley, as translated, *Book of Plants*, B. 1, says of spirits:

"Their subtle limbs silk, thin as air, arrays,
And therefore nought their rapid journey stays."

Skibo Castle, was one day favoured with a sight of the Banshie of the lake. "She was sitting on a stone, quiet, and beautifully dressed in a green silk dress, the sleeves of which were curiously puffed from the wrists to the shoulders." Among the wonderful relations of Glanvil, in his *Saducismus Triumphatus*, of the drumming demon of Tedworth, the man-servant "heard a rustling noise in his chamber, as if a person in silks was moving up and down;" and the maids also heard one "that rustled about as if it had been dressed in silk." The mansion house of Houndwood, in Berwickshire, has attached to it a family apparition called "Chappie." The servants were annoyed with its pertinacious visits even in the daytime. "Sometimes a knocking would be heard at the front door, and if anyone went to open it, nobody could be seen; except on one occasion, when, on the servant opening the door, a grand lady rushed past, and went up the passage with a majestic gait, rustling in silks and satins; but this lady was never afterwards seen, either within or without the house" (12). Denton Hall, near Newcastle, is regularly set down as haunted by a female clad in rustling silks, and the spirit or goblin or whatever it was that was embodied in these appearances was familiarly known by the name of Silky. "There is some obscure and dark rumour of secrets strangely obtained and enviously betrayed by a rival sister, ending in deprivation of reason and death; and the betrayer still walks by times in the deserted halls which she has rendered tenantless, always prophetic of disaster to those she encounters." "Midnight curtains have been drawn aside by an arm in rustling silk" (13). "The profligate Duke of Argyle, while residing at Chirton (near

(12) Henderson's *Rhymes of Berwickshire*, p. 73.

(13) T. Doubleday in Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., iii. p. 315.

North Shields), in the reign of William III., had a mistress who died very suddenly; and, as the neighbouring gossips concluded she had been murdered, her spirit ever after took its nocturnal ramble, dressed in brown silk, in the shady avenue that leads to Shields; but in modern times this troubled spirit seems to have retired to rest" (14). She is also said to have rendered the mansion house untenantable by means of unearthly noises. She is the third Silky on record. At Allanbank (or Bighouse), in Berwickshire, there is a famous ghost, endued with similar attributes, called Pearlin' Jean. "In my youth," says Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, "Pearlin' Jean was the most remarkable ghost in Scotland, and my terror when a child. Our old nurse, Jenny Blackadder, had been a servant at Allanbank, and often heard her rustling in silks up and down stairs and along the passages. She never saw her, but her husband did. She was a Frenchwoman, whom the first proprietor of Allanbank, then Mr. Stuart, met with at Paris, during his tour to finish his education as a gentleman. Some people said she was a nun, in which case she must have been a sister of charity, as she appears not to have been confined to a cloister. After some time young Stuart either became faithless to the lady or was suddenly recalled to Scotland by his parents, and had got into his carriage, at the door of the hotel, when his Dido unexpectedly made her appearance, and, stepping on the fore-wheel of the coach to address her lover, he ordered the postillion to drive on; the consequence of which was that the lady fell, and one of the wheels going over her forehead killed her. In the dusky autumnal evening, when Mr. Stuart drove under the arched gateway of Allanbank, he perceived Pearlin' Jean sitting on the top, her head and shoulders covered with blood. After this, for many years, the house was haunted; doors shut

(14) Mackenzie's *Northumberland*, ii. p. 456.

and opened with great noise at midnight; the rustling of silks and the pattering of high-heeled shoes were heard in bedrooms and passages. Nurse Jenny said there were seven ministers called in at one time to lay the spirit, 'but they did no muckle good.' The picture of the ghost was hung up between those of the lover and his lady, and kept her comparatively quiet; but when taken away she became worse-natured than ever. The ghost was designated Pearlin, from always wearing a great quantity of that sort of lace—a species of lace made of thread. Nurse Jenny told me that when Thomas Blackadder was her lover (I remember Thomas very well) they made an assignation to meet one moonlight night in the orchard at Allanbank. True Thomas, of course, was the first comer, and seeing a female in a light-coloured dress at some distance, he ran forward with open arms to embrace his Jenny; when lo and behold! as he neared the spot where the figure stood, it vanished; and presently he saw it again at the very end of the orchard, a considerable way off. Thomas went home in a fright; but Jenny, who came last, and saw nothing, forgave him, and they were married. Many years after this, about the year 1790, two ladies paid a visit to Allanbank—I think the house was then let—and passed the night there. They had never heard a word about the ghost; but they were disturbed the whole night with something walking backwards and forwards in their bed-chamber. This I had from the best authority" (15). Sir Robert Stuart of Allanbank was created baronet in 1697, so that it must have been previous to that time that Jean died.

We cannot assign to these traditions a far back date; although they refer to a period when silk, as an article of dress, was so seldom seen, that it took the attention in country places. We find a lady's silk dress in the Breton Lai of Ywenec. Ladies

(15) Mrs. Crowe's *Night-side of Nature.*

wore silk mantles at Kenilworth Castle in 1286; but it was not till the reign of James I., in England, that it came into general use. Massinger's "City Madam" wore

> "Sattin on solemn days,
> It being for the City's honour that
> There should be a distinction made between
> The wife of a patrician and a plebeian."

In the time of Charles II. Secretary Pepys' wife dresses in a tabby or waved silk. In the year 1668 the tide of fashion set entirely in favour of French fabrics, so that it became a complaint that "the women's hats were turned into hoods made of French silk, whereby every maid-servant became a standing revenue to the French King of one-half of her wages" (16). This trade, we learn from the *Guardian* of September 25th, 1713, was interrupted by Marlborough's wars; and it was apprehended that if peace was then concluded, "in all probability half the looms in Spittlefields would be laid down, and our ladies be again clothed in French silk." "In the good old times," says Washington Irving, "that saw my aunt in the heyday of youth, a fine lady was a most formidable animal, and required to be approached with the same awe and devotion that a Tartar feels in the presence of the Grand Lama. If a gentleman offered to take her hand, except to help her into a carriage, or lead her into a drawing-room, such frowns! *such a rustling of brocade and taffeta!*" (17). Hence the poets of these days in inviting from the court to the cottage, inquire in accents winning as they are musical:

> "O Nancy wilt thou go with me,
> Nor sigh to leave the flaunting town?
> Can silent glens have charms for thee,
> The lowly cot and russet gown?

(16) *Silk Manufactures*, p. 25.

(17) *Salmagundi*, April 25, 1807.

No longer drest in silken sheen,
No longer deck'd with jewels rare,
Say canst thou quit each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair ? "

In Scotland, the upper classes alone were privileged to "wear claithes of silk." Prohibitory edicts extend from the time of James I., 1429, down to 1673, in the reign of Charles II. In 1621 it was statuted "That no servants, men or women, weare any clothing, except those that are made of cloath, fusteans, canvas, or stuffs made in the countrey. And that they shall have no silk upon their cloathes; except silk buttons, and button holes; and silk garters without pearling or roses, under the paine of one hundreth markes, *toties quoties*." It thus was felt as a terrible offence to the aristocratic circles of Edinburgh, and became a town talk, when a girl of the city in 1750 presumed to wear a silk gown! (18). It was long before this innovation became general. Thus, about 1724, sings the "country lass:"

"Although my gown be homespun grey,
My skin it is as soft
As them that satin weeds do wear,
And carry their heads aloft."

Silk dresses were inherited as heirlooms for generations.

"For her gown some ancient matron quakes,
Her gown of silken woof, all figured o'er
With roses white, far larger than the life,
On azure ground—her grandam's wedding garb,
Old as the year when Sheriffmuir was fought."

Grahame.

I shall not venture to trace this luxury northwards into Northumberland. As we learn from the *Spectator*, July

(18) Chambers' *Traditions of Edinburgh*, ii. p. 55.

28, 1711, the fashions of the metropolis did not then travel rapidly as now, but crept by slow degrees into the provinces. "A fashion makes its progress much slower into Cumberland than into Cornwall. I have heard in particular that the Steenkirk (neckcloth) arrived but two months ago at Newcastle, and that there are several commodes in those parts which are worth taking a journey thither to see." This at least we know, that a silk dress had reached North Shields in the reign of William III., and the degraded wearer, like a Scottish damsel two hundred years before her, paid the penalty of her folly.

"My kirtill was of lincum green,
Weill lacit with silken passments rair;
God gif I had never prideful been,
For fadit is my yellow hair.

"When I was young I had great stait,
Weill cherishit baith with less and mair;
For shame now steill I off the gait,
For fadit is my yellow hair!"

N.B.—In an article in the *Transactions of the Tyneside Naturalists' Field-Club*, for 1861, p. 93, on "Local Superstititions at Stamfordham," by the Rev. J. F. Bigge, M.A., it is said, "The renowned Silky has not been heard of for some years. I was once attending a very old woman, named Pearson, at Welton Mill, the foundations of which, if they exist, are at the bottom of one of the Whittle Dean reservoirs. The old woman told me, a few days before her death, that she had seen Silky the night before, sitting at the bottom of her bed, dressed in silk."

The Gray Man of Bellister.

"An old rude 'tale' that fitted well
The ruin wild and hoary."
Coleridge.

It was at the gray of the evening twilight, about half a century ago, that a stripling held his way towards the castle of Bellister, with the view of entering into service there. Having crossed the Tyne at Haltwhistle, he found the darkness increasing fast; and although the distance he had to travel was not great, yet in those days bad companions were more common than welcome on the unfrequented roads after nightfall. Leaving the ferry, he passed a thicket of willow bushes, and then his route lay along a broken road, which he had been directed to follow as that which would conduct him to the castle. He had not proceeded far when he descried a traveller at some little distance in advance; a circumstance rather singular, as he had tarried for a few minutes at the ferry, and no one had come over for some time previous. The youth, a stranger in the place, and looking forward with solicitude towards the new scene of his labours, soon overcame the mysterious feeling, to which this idea gave rise, in the prospect of relief from his own anxious thoughts presented to him for some part of the journey. He therefore quickened his pace, and when sufficiently near shouted to the unknown individual to stop. But the stranger paid no regard—he neither stopped nor looked behind. The lad had now approached within a few yards, yet with the utmost exertion he could not overtake him; for he passed forward with superhuman rapidity, gliding rather than walking over the surface. An unpleasant sensation of fear crept over the youth, which was not a little increased, by a closer inspection, so far as the dubious light enabled, of the object of his misgivings. His head was

uncovered, and his long hair hung behind, white as the frosts of winter. He was wrapt in a long gray cloak reaching to his heels, and he appeared to carry a small bundle under his arm, concealed by his upper vestments. So occupied had the youth been in the struggle, that he did not at first perceive that he had now reached the broken gateway of the old castle of Bellister. At the instant, when its dark mass became evident through the gloom, the mysterious figure unexpectedly stood still, and turning abruptly round upon the youth revealed the awful nature of the fellowship which he, in the simplicity of his heart, was so eager to obtain. Death had set his pallid seal on that grisly countenance, and a bloody gash that ran across it heightened the expression of ghastliness imprinted there! The thick beard was dripping with blood, and the fore-part of the garments was dyed with the ensanguined stream. The being fixed its large lustreless eyes upon the youth, and pointing with a menacing scowl towards the dilapidated ruin melted silently away.

It was a scene of the deepest horror. For some time he stood spell-bound to the spot, gazing into the vacant air that gave back no image, but extended itself in limitless expansion into a vast, terrible, all-absorbing gulf that seemed to invite him forward in pursuit of the dread, unsubstantial essences that roamed its dim and dismal depths. Rallying his scattered fortitude, his first idea was that of self-preservation. His new home was nigh, and thither, scarcely conscious of the action, he betook himself. The old mistress was the only one of the family within, and to her he revealed the horrifying apparition he had witnessed. The old lady was much concerned. Of the existence of a spirit near the place she was fully aware; she had heard of it from others wiser and older than herself, members of a generation of which there were now few survivors; and there were several instances in which it had made itself visible to persons

whom she well knew. Such a thing never occurred, she said, without some accompanying calamity, and when, as on the present occasion, there were manifested tokens of a vindictive disposition on the spirit's part, the danger was near and alarming. It came to pass as the old lady feared and predicted. That very evening the unfortunate lad was seized with a severe illness, and before next morning was a corpse.

When the castle was occupied by the Blenkinsops, its manorial lords, many, many centuries ago, a wandering minstrel, says tradition, sought the protection of its roof far on in the evening, and the humble request was granted, and the aged musician was invited to the family hearth. The days of high-souled chivalry and of generous feeling had not then departed, when, not yet knowing "the bleak freezings of neglect," the minstrel obtained a ready admittance to the society of the gentle and the august, and his tale and harp found favourable audience with all.

> "High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
> He poured to lord and lady gay,
> The unpremeditated lay."

But the hospitable boon had not been long conceded ere dark suspicions began to rankle in the breast of the Lord of Bellister. He was at feud with a neighbouring baron, who scrupled not to employ the basest means for gratifying his rancour. In the appearance of this stranger, at such an untimely hour, there appeared to him some reason to dread the intrusion of a spy, or the disguised agent of his rival, to execute some revengeful plot. Distrust, therefore, sat upon the countenance of the baron,* and

* "Some gentlemen of the north are called to this day barons," says Grey, in his *Chorographia*, 1649. The Blenkinsops of Bellister were entitled to the designation of baron only in courtesy. By a similar token of respect the Whitfields of Whitfield, in the same

as the cordiality with which he had been received declined, a visible constraint gathered over the minstrel's features, which soon communicated itself to the entire circle.

> "By fits less frequent from the crowd
> Was heard the burst of laughter loud.
> For still, as squire and archer stared
> On that dark face, and matted beard,
> Their glee and game declined."

Hence it was with more than customary alacrity that the signal for withdrawal was obeyed. After the company had retired, the Lord of Bellister continued to pace his apartment, filled with perplexing anxieties. The image of the harper, too abject to justify his fears, still haunted him, and the oft experienced perfidy of his deadly foe. At length suspense rose into passion. He summoned his attendants and directed them to bring the harper into his presence. But how was every doubt and jealousy anew inflamed when they found the chamber that he had occupied empty, and the inmate gone? Either he had augured treachery from his entertainer, or he was conscious that the guilty errand on which he had been sent was detected. In the mind of the baron his flight only served to confirm the unfavourable ideas that he had been led to conceive. The bloodhounds were ordered out, and instant pursuit after the fugitive commenced, the baron himself leading a band of his followers. The bloodhounds were soon upon his track, and rapidly outstripped the vengeance of their exasperated master. They came up with the poor old minstrel hard by the willow

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vicinity, transmitted to the latest generation the local title of yearl, *i.e.* earl; which, after they became extinct, passed to Whitfield of Clargill, whose daughter and heiress—married to a Dr. Graham—was called Countess of Clargill.

trees near the banks of the Tyne, and tore him to pieces before any of the party had reached him.

Remorse for the barbarous outrage seized the baron, but the deed of violence was irremediable. Whenever after the sunset hour he took his way to the castle the fate of the hapless minstrel rose in terror before his eyes, and the visible shape of the murdered man attended him home. The baron slept with his fathers, and likewise all that race. But the injured spirit still frequented its ancient circuit—unsatisfied and unappeased. At some periods it was more than usually outrageous; its efforts to attract notice became more assiduous, and the appearances that it assumed more terrific. This agitation and inquietude were always found to be the prelude of some impending misfortune to the house of Bellister and its dependents, between whose fate and its own there had been induced an inseparable bond.*

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* Similar to this is the Irish and Gaelic superstition of the Banshee, or attendant fairy-wife of families of the pure stock, whose office it was to announce, by her wailing, the approaching death of some one of the destined race.

> "To me, my sweet Kathleen, the Benshee has cried,
> And I die—ere to-morrow I die;
> This rose thou hast gathered, and laid by my side
> Will live, my child, longer than I"
>
> *Smyth.*

According to Delrio, a spectral woman in mourning attire was wont to appear in the castle of an illustrious family in Bohemia previous to the death of its mistress. The Macleans of Loch Buy are thus premonished by the spirit of one of their ancestors. "Before the death of any of his race, the phantom chief gallops along the sea-beach near to the castle, announcing the event by cries and lamentations" (Scott's *Demonology*, &c., p. 341.) Thus also the family of

The Gray Man no longer appears at Bellister nor traverses the broken pathway near which the clump of willows still responds in sad murmurs to the wizard blast of evening. But Bellister and its vicinity continue to be a haunted and forbidden place after nightfall. The rustic passes it with a beating heart; the schoolboy's bravery is over and his merriment hushed till it is by; and the rider, trusting neither his eye nor his ear, applies the spur to his steed and hurries past. The dread of an unexpiated crime and of a mystery unrevealed hangs unlifted from the spot; and nature, as she spreads the pall of midnight over the lonesome way and the gloomy ruin, and as the sweep of the rushing river combines with the moaning breeze and the owl's funeral scream, seems to sympathise with the peasant's awe and approve his reverence for the life of a fellow-being.

The jottings of this Northumbrian ghost story were communicated by Mr. William Pattison, a native of the district in which the castle is situated. Bellister Castle stands on an artificial mount, on the southern side of the Tyne, opposite to

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Rothiemurcus had the Bodach na Dun, or the Ghost of the Hill; Kinchardine the Spectre of the Bloody Hand—

> "With Highland broad-sword, targe, and plaid,
> And fingers red with gore."

Gartinbeg House was haunted by Bodach Gartin, and Tulloch Gorm by Maug Molach, or the Girl with the Hairy Left Hand (Pennant). And like to these were the "White Lady of the House of Brandenburg," and the fairy Melusine, who usually prognosticated the recurrence of mortality to some noble family of Poitou. Prince, in his *Worthies of Devon*, records the appearance of a white bird performing the same office for the worshipful lineage of Oxenham (Croker's *Fairy Legends*, p. 126). Brand identifies these with wraiths, but they had a general commission, whereas the "warning spirit" was a family appurtenance.

Haltwhistle, and was surrounded by a broad fosse. It has been an irregular structure, and now consists of a rude and crumbling mass of ruins, overshadowed by an enormous sycamore. Being the seat of a younger branch of the Blenkinsops, it was the property of Thomas Blenkinsop 1553, and of George 1568. At present the castle and estate belong to the Bacon family.*

* Mackenzie's *Northumberland*, ii. p. 316.

XVII.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF NORTH OF ENGLAND FOLKLORE.

Legends of Nafferton.

There are two legends about Nafferton; one to Nafferton Castle, or Nafferton Old Hall, built by Philip de Ulecote, concerns Long Lonkin; the other, located at Nafferton Hall, a more recent structure, is a ghost story of a murdered pedlar.

Nafferton, in the parish of Ovingham, "lies immediately north of Ovington, from which it is separated by a small stream which joins the rivulet flowing through Whittle Dean." Philip de Ulecote, a favourite of King John, commenced the erection of the castle, taking the materials from the Roman wall in the vicinity. He was not permitted to finish the structure, and the dismantled ruin still remains much in the same state in which it was left by the workmen in 1217. "The building consisted of a keep, twenty feet square, and two outer balies, of moderate dimensions, placed on the summit of a gentle slope. There was no natural protection on the west, nor would it have been easy to make one of a formidable character. At present the remains of Philip de Ulecote's castle lie screened from passing observation by the surrounding plantations; though it is probable that in the winter season they may be discerned through the leafless trees as the traveller journeys along the high road contiguous,

leading from Haddon-on-the-Wall to Corbridge."* I am informed that the moat can be traced on three sides of the building.

It is with this ruin that the Northumbrian version of the "Ballad of Lammikin," corrupted into Long Lonkin, has acquired a local association. As the castle never was inhabited, unless as forming a receptacle of robbers, the popular tradition which I have to relate is manifestly apocryphal in so far as it relates to Nafferton. The following narratives relating to both mansions I obtained in 1844 from an old man named Forster, in Newcastle, the descendant of one of the tenants of the Derwentwater family.

A lady, courted by a gentleman named Long Lonkin (whom the Northumbrian ballad makes a moss-trooper), preferred the lord of Nafferton, whose circumstances made him a more desirable match. One child blessed the marriage. Long Lonkin vowed to be revenged, and, to accomplish his purpose, attached to his interest the child's maid, with whom he concerted his measures. His vengeance was most bitter, for he had determined to stab both the mother and her offspring. It happened that the lord of the place had occasion to proceed to London on business, and Lonkin, apprised of his approaching absence, came in the evening and was admitted by the treacherous maid. In order to induce the lady to descend from an upper chamber, by the advice of the maid he pricked the child till it cried, and then a second time till it screamed. The mother called down to the maid to appease the child, but she exclaimed that she could not—she would have to come herself.

"I can't still him ladie,
Till you come down yoursell."

* Hartshorne's *Memoirs of the History and Antiquities of Northumberland*, ii. pp. 237, 238.

Lonkin pricked the child a third time, and the poor mother appeared on the scene, and was killed as well as her child.

The Lord of Nafferton had not proceeded far on his journey when an impression took hold of his mind that all was not right at home. Two of the ballads tell how this alarm was created. The rings on his fingers were bursting in twain, and the silver buttons of his coat would not stay on. Returning with all speed, he called to the servants within to let down the drawbridge, and it being done he was admitted. When Long Lonkin heard the noise of the coach passing over the bridge he sought means to escape; but the bridge was secured, and as he could not get across the moat he fled to a dean below the castle, in which flows the Whittle Burn, and took refuge in a large tree that overhung a deep pool in the water. When the lord of the place entered his apartments a horrible scene of carnage was revealed, and the guilty maid did not conceal by whose agency it had been effected. The murderer was sought for the whole night, but it was not till morning that he was detected, concealed among the tree branches. The outraged husband called on him to descend, but he refused. He then threatened to shoot him if he did not surrender, but Lonkin recklessly leapt into the black boiling pool beneath, and sunk, never to rise. This pool, now called Long Lonkin's Pool, the country people declare is bottomless. A good swimmer had dived into it from the crags on both sides and had found no bottom, and it was only by great exertions that he escaped the fate of Lonkin. Some suppose that there is a spring at the bottom of it, for in the extremest cold it is never frozen over; but this circumstance others account for from a weill, or continuous eddy, being in the middle of it. Long Lonkin's tree was cut down thirty or forty years previous to 1844.

There are at least seven versions of the ballad relating to this "ogre," as Professor Aytoun designated Lonkin, or Lammikin,

with a variety of other aliases. In most of these the murderer is hanged, and his accomplice is burned at the stake. In one he is "boiled in a pot full of lead." The Scots versions make Lammikin the architect of a castle; sometimes it is Buncle Castle, Berwickshire, "Lord Weire's Castle," "Lord Wearie's Castle," the Castle of "Balwearie," "Prime Castle," which he built up, but for his labour "payment got nane." It was for this wrong that he "brewed the black revenge" that wrought out such a fatal catastrophe.

The New Hall at Nafferton, according to the narrator's statement, was for a time an occasional residence * of the Derwentwater (Radcliffe) family, who left it for Dilston Hall, after its re-edification in 1768. When this old man was acquainted with it, it had become a farmhouse. When occupied by one in that line of life, strange things were seen about the place, and most unaccountable noises were heard. The apparitions were most rampant when a child was to be born, or any one was to die, or as preliminaries to any fatal accident, and they took the forms of a white weasel, a white hen, or a white rabbit, and sometimes of a person without the head dressed in white. Rappings were customary at the windows, and uproars in various quarters mingled with loud shrieks. Doors would open without cause, and would not shut. The farmer, who appears to have been a recent incomer, accommodated himself to these disturbances as best he could, till one night they became insufferable. He slept in

* I merely give the narrator's statement, and I am not sure of its accuracy. In 1677 Allan Swinburne, of Nafferton, gent, was a Roman Catholic recusant (*Depositions from York Castle*, Surtees Soc., p. 228). Dec. 19, 1688, Edmond Johnson, a Roman Catholic priest, depones that he was received in that month at Mr. Swinburn's, of Naferton (p. 286).

an upper room near the "leads." From the door of this room a stair conducted to the "leads," round which one could walk, access being obtained to this outer area by another door at the stair-top. On this occasion the commotion became so active that he afterwards declared, in consonance with his agricultural ideas, that if ever so many "trace-chains" had been trailed across the floor, they would not have created a noise so aggravating. As if this was not sufficient, something like a skeel * or cog turned on its side commenced rolling down the stairs on the outside, and played "bump" against the door of his room, as if it would smash it to pieces. The noise inside appeared to proceed from and retire to a cavity in his room covered by a hearthstone, called the "Priest's Hole." To ascertain that no one had entered from the leads, he went up the stair and examined the door above, but found it shut. When he returned again to his sleeping apartment, the advancing and retreating noises recommenced in the direction of the Priest's Hole. Determined to be at the bottom of this annoyance, he called his brother to his assistance there and then, and they took up the hearthstone. Beneath it there was an accumulation of rubbish, broken bricks, &c., as if it had been intentionally filled up. They got a spade and a bag, and emptied the space of its contents, until they reached a flagged recess, surrounded at the sides by a stone seat. This was the hiding-place of the priest on any dangerous emergency, and there generally was one of these concealed compartments in the houses of the gentry of the old Roman Catholic persuasion. The operators having cleared this out were about to desist,

* Skeel, a cylindrical wooden vessel for carrying milk or water, with an upright handle made of one of the staves in place of a bow. Isl. "Skiola," a milk-pail. Sw. "Skål," a bowl.—Brockett's *Glossary*.

for there was nothing in this to account for the noises, but they imagined that they twice heard a voice urging them to dig on. On striking the flags of the floor, one sounded as if covering a hollow; and on removing this they gained access to a second apartment, stuffed with shavings and stable manure. This was also flagged, and pursuing similar tactics, they were admitted to a third place of retreat, which was in like manner filled with shavings and "horse muck;" and while emptying it they came upon a shirt and a nightcap. The shirt was all bloody where the bowels in a living body would have been situated when it was worn. There was no skeleton nor any human remains; but there was an oven, in which any vestige of humanity might have been consumed. It is needless to comment on the unlikelihood of the articles of clothing being neglected by those who took so many precautions to have their crime concealed. The material of the shirt when taken up appeared like new linen, and the farmer was going to send it to the factor, but when he tried it, after being exposed to the atmosphere, it had become like "burnt tinder."

The farmer now began to question an old man who had long dwelt at the place if there could be any reasonable explanation of what he had witnessed. The old man thought there was. In the interval between the Radcliffes' occupancy and its being converted into a farmhouse, and that was a considerable time before this occurrence, a man had kept an inn in the hall, and let out the rooms for the accommodation of shooters during the fowling season. Once on a time there came a "pethert," or pedlar, to lodge there, who having never more been heard tell of, there were strong surmises of his having been murdered, and many of the old coal-pits thereabouts were searched for his body, without any result. When suspicion had been allayed, it was observed that the innkeeper's daughters began to dress in garments made of an expensive material, which girls in their

station were not in the habit to wear, but which corresponded with some of those which the missing packman had been accustomed to carry. But this elevation was but transient; "they did little good; everything went against them, and they became ruined," said the old man, with a satisfied air, in summing up.

A well-told story of a pedlar murdered in a lone farmhouse above Rothbury, whose ghost haunted the perpetrator to her dying day, may be seen in W. A. Chatto's *Rambles on the Scottish Border*, pp. 93, 94. James Hogg in one of his ballads gives the tale of the murder of the "Thirlestane Pedlar," and its singular discovery. Thirlestane is situated near Primside Loch, Yetholm. Mr. Robert White, of date October 17th, 1861, writes: "Similar stories to that of the Thirlestane Pedlar exist in Northumberland. Tradition speaks of a packman being murdered in the same way at Ray Mill, near Whelpington. Poor fellows! they would for the most part have some money and goods upon them; and this might induce rogues to deprive them of life, more especially as the cruel deed might not easily be discovered.

XVIII.

LEGENDS RESPECTING HUGE STONES.

"Oh! make his tomb where mortal eye,
Its buried wealth may ne'er descry.
Years roll away—oblivion claims
Her triumph o'er heroic names;
And hands profane disturb the clay
That once was fired with glory's ray;
And avarice from their secret gloom,
Drags even the treasures of the tomb."

Hemans.

"What hath the miner found?
Relic or treasure, giant sword of old,
Gems bedded deep, rich veins of burning gold?"

Ibid.

"This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so. We are lucky, boy, and to be so still requires nothing but secresy."

Shakespeare's "Winter's Tale."

"The taste for gold everywhere precedes the desire of instruction, and a taste for researches into antiquity."

Humboldt.

A large stone in the middle of a field, or laid in cumbrous bulk by a pathway side, has little to commend itself to the attention of the passer-by beyond the conjectures that may be raised as to the causes that have detached such a huge mass from its parent rock and conveyed it to the situation that it

occupies. To the individuals, however, under whose recognition it has habitually fallen during a lifetime spent in its neighbourhood, it possesses an interest due to something more than to a mere aggregation of unconscious matter transported from its parent site by some unknown operation of nature. Besides serving as the emblem that recalls many a scene of youthful frolic—many an hour of "perfect gladsomeness" spent around its base in the "careless hour," which even to the busiest affords a lucid interval—it, in all likelihood, has become interwoven with their higher principles, the reverence with which they regard things of ancient date, and the veneration attached to the works and memories of their sires. These sympathies it has enlisted in its favour from certain presumed purposes it may have served in the economy of their remote ancestors, or from some history "passing strange," of which it is the memorial. Perhaps it stands as one of those primitive landmarks, which it would be sacrilege to remove; perhaps it is the trophy of some old battlefield, memorable in proportion to the carnage with which it was bedewed and the obstinacy with which it was contested; perhaps reared by the might of armies over the tomb of some ancient chieftain whose "soul brightened in danger"—in the days of yore, ere an oblivious generation had forgotten the story—it bore a name "at which the world grew pale;" or perhaps it was the rude and unhewn altar on which, during the days of heathen idolatry, the Druid priest offered cruel and detestable sacrifice to sanguinary divinities, and from the recesses of the sacred grove, with which it might have been environed, promulgated his decrees of horror and of blood. The general opinion, however, with regard to any unusually bulky stone which the strength and means of the agriculturist cannot remove beyond the precincts of his field, or which, variegated with the accumulated lichens of centuries, catches the eye in solitary massiveness

upon the waste, is that it marks the spot where "bones of mighty chiefs lie hid"—men who, like the northern Vikings, had their ill-gotten booty inhumed with them in order that their posterity, with no other heritage than the sword, might not indulge in disgraceful inaction, or sully the fierce fame of their ruthless race. It is also an accredited belief that, in the troublous times with which past history teems, many people were constrained to adopt the means of concealment, which the coverts of such stones offered, to secure their valuables from marauding Dane, or Scot, or Pict, or Saxon, till more prosperous times should dawn, and they, coming back from long exile or from the battlefield, should possess their patrimonial property in peace. But the expected calm returned not—or the owner having fallen in distant lands, the prospect of his native scenes never gladdened his bosom more; and his relinquished wealth lies mouldering and gathering dross in the fields from which hard industry had wrung it, excluded from all benefits that it might confer as a portion of the circulating medium.

In consequence of such various surmises, while these stones on some occasions awaken misgivings from the wild tales associated with them, they have likewise become themes of livelier interest, from the incentives that they supply to avarice, as being the depositories of unsunned treasures. But fearful barriers, sufficient to deter the devoutest champion in the cause of Mammon, separate the eagerness of adventurers and "the all-wished for gold." Argus-eyed monsters, more hideous and dread than Demogorgon, have had it entrusted to their vigilant superintendence, and spells which baffle human ingenuity and might to unlock have interposed their potent seal against all attempts to recall the buried stores to their legitimate purposes. And even though these bugbears be disregarded as fictions of a terrified imagination, the uncertainty of money-finding is so

proverbial, and the indications of its existence are so deceptive, that even the most enthusiastic votary of the trade seldom ventures upon its practice without some more certain intimations than the floating traditions of a past age. How then shall it be determined that his labour shall not be disconcerted—the true period for securing the prize has arrived—and that his hopes are not placed on perishable foundations? The usual intelligence of this fact, leaving out of view the aid of the diviner's wand, which with magnetic certainty vibrates to the emanations evolved from its sympathetic metal, is obtained by dreams—three unvarying dreams, and the mind is set at rest as to every circumstance connected with the accomplishment of its desires!

Out of the tales that tradition has preserved of endeavours after stone-concealed riches, two may be selected, in neither of which the lords of the manor were entitled to lay claim to treasure trove.

In a field near Meldon, a favourite site in the records of local treasure quests, was placed a large stone, under which a person named James Gillies dreamt successively there was hid a box of a three-sided figure filled with gold. James was unfortunately destitute of one of the prime qualities of an adept in money explorations—the capacity of being "sworn to deepest secrecy." Recognising no merit in privacy or concealment, whatever event of novelty occurred to him was invariably uppermost, and what could better attract a wondering auditory than a revelation of his unrivalled vision? Hence it became blazed abroad and reached the ears of more individuals than even he would have been willing to entrust it to, who made no scruple of appropriating to their own private account the information so obligingly furnished. The instances in which the nocturnal hints were repeated became at length so frequent that James, who was always a great loiterer, resolved to make a

complete story of his materials by exploring the "golden harvest," which assuredly fortune had been devising for him, as the result of such incessant importunities. Arrived at the spot, he found indeed the stone, as the dream had represented, but it had been violently wrenched from its position, and upon examining its former resting-place he beheld in the midst a triangular pit that bore, moulded upon its sides, the impression of some more solid nucleus having once existed there of sufficiently ample size to satisfy the wishes of the most eager aspirant after a competency of the world's riches; but the "pose" was gone, the coffer had vanished, while to the garrulous dreamer there remained nothing but the mortification of having the prize snatched from him because he could not hold his peace.

> "But not a word of it, 'tis fairies' treasure;
> Which, but reveal'd, brings on the blabber's ruine."
> Massinger's *Fatall Dowry*.

A money coffer of a triangular shape is not a Northumbrian peculiarity, for Hogg, in his *Winter Evening Tales*, has related a tradition of a "three neukit stane like a cockit hat," under which was hid a purse or pose—the scene being Kelso Bridge (London Bridge according to other authorities).

In the fields between Lilburn and Middleton rests a stone which, in the suggestions of the "Religio loci," is not to be removed while the present system of things maintains its stability. Two hinds, with more than the intrepidity of their class, resolved to explore the mystery that it shrouded and enrich themselves by one energetic stroke. Accordingly, when the shades of night had fallen and nature had sunk to repose, having provided themselves with mattocks and spades, they, without informing any one, and without waiting for the customary warnings, repaired to the scene of enterprise and commenced their daring operations. They had already penetrated

to a considerable depth without any manifestations of danger, each fresh spadeful of earth communicating invigorated energy to their arms, and reinspiring them with hope; and they had begun to flatter themselves that the oft-repeated tale of demoniac watchers over the treasures that slumbered beneath was but a vain chimera which ignorance had conjured up, when all at once one of them heard a low fluttering, as of something struggling to get free, come from beneath the stone. He communicated his impressions to his coadjutor, but as the sound had not reached him, he received but a rude banter to reassure him. He again resumed the work, when suddenly a repeated movement from below shot a pang of terror to the heart of both. One of them still persisted in disturbing the precincts of the fated stone; but scarcely had he removed the unhallowed soil when the stone commenced moving up and down violently, and out there issued from under it—and the earth quaked to let it forth—a creature all in white, in figure like a swan, that "flaffered and flew," and made such strange and hideous outcry that the delinquents, casting down their implements, hurried off, each in the direction his terrors prompted him would farthest carry him from the grasp of the evil thing which his unhallowed doings had evoked from the recesses of the earth, and whose rage no human power might avail to appease. The sanctuary of the stone was ever afterwards inviolate. Fixed in its pristine position it still draws the dread and reverence of all the swains in its vicinity who have not yet learned to undervalue the opinions and belief of their simple progenitors.

The immovable stone has its representative elsewhere. On a hillside at Chertsey, in Surrey, "lies a huge stone of gravel and sand which they call the devil's stone, and believe it cannot be moved, and that a treasure is hid underneath." *

* Aubrey's *Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey.*

In a letter from the famous astrologer, Dr. John Dee, to Lord Burghley, dated 3rd October, 1574, he says that "of late, I have byn sued unto by diverse sorts of people, of which some by vehement iterated dreams, some by vision (as they have thought), other by speche forced to their imagination by night, have byn informed of certayn places where Threasor doth lye hid: which all, for feare of *Kepars* (as the phrase commonly nameth them), or for mistrust of truth in the places assigned, and some for other causes, have forborn to deal farder, unleast I should corage them or cownseile them how to procede." * In Ireland "the popular opinions with respect to hidden treasures are that they are generally under the guardianship of spirits who assume various hideous shapes to affright mortals who seek to discover them. Several of the great lake serpents and water-cows of the Irish Fairy Mythology are supposed to guard treasures; in some instances black cats are similarly employed." † Near Gunnarton, in North Tynedale, is a remarkable British earthwork, called the "Money Hill," from the local tradition of a dragon-guarded hoard of treasure.‡

It is the general opinion, worthy of notice as respects the acknowledged supremacy of industry in contributing to success in the pursuits of life, that few of those who have endeavoured to enrich themselves by waiting upon such accidents of fortune, in preference to engaging in a lawful calling, have received special benefit from the riches thence derived. Illusory as fairy treasures they have gone away from their possessors with-

* Sir H. Ellis's *Letters of Eminent Literary Men*, p. 36.

† Wilde's *Irish Popular Superstitions*, p. 98.

‡ Rev. G. R. Hall in *Arch. Æliana*, N. S., viii. p. 66; also vol. vii. p. 12. It was opened in 1865, and afforded only a negative result.

out their enjoying any perceptible advantage from them. No one has ever come to good who searched for gold, say the Italians. As a maxim applicable to the bulk of mankind, it is undeniable that opulence easily and unexpectedly procured leaves its thoughtless obtainer in even a worse state of wretchedness than his original poverty.

> "For as he got it freely, so
> He spends it frank and freely too."

There are, however, individuals, exceptions from the crowd, in whom prosperity, instead of exciting them to a prodigal profusion, or conduct incompatible with their previous steady attention to the duties of their station, only generates increased exertions, in order to be found worthy of the eminence to which they have unexpectedly attained. By this moderate procedure, any unforeseen efflux of wealth becomes so moulded and incorporated with the products of their prudently acquired gains, that it participates in the blessing which will sooner or later reward the efforts of patient and well-bestowed diligence. As an illustration of these remarks a popular story may be cited, of which the occurrences happened about eighty years ago, and have, according to the relater's account, the testimony of living and faithful witnesses.

A farm-steading situated near the borders of Northumberland, a few miles from Haltwhistle, was occupied at the period to which we refer by a family of the name of W——k——n. In front of the dwelling house, and at about sixty yards' distance, lay a stone of vast size, as ancient, for so tradition amplifies the date, as the Flood. On this stone, at the dead hour of the night, might be discerned a female figure, wrapped in a grey cloak, with one of those low-crowned black bonnets so familiar to our grandmothers upon her head, incessantly knock! knock! knocking in a

fruitless endeavour to split the impenetrable rock. Duly as night came round she occupied her lonely station in the same low, crouching attitude, and pursued the dreary obligations of her destiny till the grey streaks of the dawn gave admonition to depart. From this, the only perceptible action in which she engaged, she gained the name of "Nelly the Knocker." So perfectly had the inmates of the farmhouse, in the lapse of time which will reconcile sights and events the most disagreeable and alarming, become accustomed to Nelly's undeviating nightly din, that the business of life went forward unimpeded by any apprehension accruing from her presence. Did the servant-man make his punctual resort to the neighbouring cottages, he took the liberty of scrutinising Nelly's antiquated garb, that varied not with the vicissitudes of seasons, or pried sympathisingly into the progress of her monotonous occupation; and though her pale, ghostly, contracted features gave a momentary pang of terror that unhinged the courage of the boldest, it was rapidly effaced in the vortex of good fellowship into which he was speedily drawn. Did the lover venture an appointment with his mistress at the rustic stile of the stack-garth, Nelly's unwearied hammer, instead of proving a barrier, only served by imparting a grateful sense of mutual danger to render more intense the raptures of the hour of meeting. So apathetic were the feelings cherished towards her, and so little jealousy existed of her power to injure, that the relater of these circumstances states that on several occasions she has passed Nelly at her laborious toil without evincing the least flutter of the nerves, beyond a hurried step, as she stole a glance at the inexplicable form. An event, in the course of years, disclosed the secrets which that marvellous stone enshrined, and drove poor Nelly for ever from the scene so inscrutably linked with her fate. Two of the sons of the farmer were rapidly approaching maturity, when one of them, more reflecting and shrewd,

suggested the idea of relieving Nelly from her avocation, and of taking possession of the legacy to which she was evidently and urgently summoning. He proposed, conjointly with his father and brother, to blast the stone, as the most expeditious mode of obtaining access to her arcana; and this in the open daylight, in order that any tutelary protection she might be disposed to extend to her favourite haunt might, as she was a thing of darkness and the night, be effectually countervailed. Nor were they disappointed, for upon clearing away the earth and fragments that resulted from the explosion, there was revealed a cluster of urns, closely packed together, containing gold. Anxious that nothing should transpire, they had taken the precaution in the meanwhile to despatch the female servant a needless errand, and ere her return the whole was efficiently and without suspicion secured. And so completely did they succeed in keeping their own counsel, and so successfully did their reputation keep pace with the cautious production of their undivulged treasures, that for many years afterwards they were never suspected of gaining any advantage from Nelly's "knocking"; their improved appearance and the somewhat imposing figure they made in their little district being solely attributed to their superior judgment and to the good management of their lucky farm. As Lilly the adept says, "Secrecy and intelligent operators, with a strong confidence and knowledge of what they are doing, are best for this work." *

The "Knocker" is a Welsh spirit, little statured, about half a yard long, who indicates to the workmen in the mines the rich veins of silver and gold. The buccas or knockers are also be-

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* *Lives of Lilly and Ashmole*, p. 48. Mr. J. F. Campbell, author of the *West Highland Tales*, on reading this in 1862, remarks: "The same story is now current of a farmer near Skipness. It is but a popular tale, I suspect."

lieved to inhabit the rocks, caves, adits, and wells of Cornwall.* Such also is the German Wichtlein, the "swart fairy of the mine." † Thus widely scattered are the relics of pagan beliefs, from the common home, whence they diverged in the far back ages.

Far up in the bleak moorland hollow that divides the tail-ridges of Hedgehope and "the wild Dunmore," half concealed by rank heath and the gray mountain mosses, half sunk in the yielding peaty soil, hard by a fretful rivulet, bordered by its narrow stripe of emerald grass and rushes, stands the decayed Druid Circle of Three-stone Burn. It consists of a single circle of rude, unequal, porphyritic stones, placed in an oval, whose diameter from west to east is 38, and from north to south 33 yards. The stones are about eight or nine yards distant, but there are many gaps occasioned by the stones having been overturned, or having disappeared in the ground, during the lapse of ages. Whether they once enclosed an area dedicated to religious observances, or formed the *thingstead* for determining the controversies among the rude tribes, the foundations of whose circular abodes, whose still open peat diggings, and whose plots of corn ground, laid out in antique fashion, still occupy, undisturbed, many a slope and depression of that hilly region, is immaterial to our present theme. ‡ It

* Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 88.

† Grose. Brand's *Pop. Ant.*, ii. pp. 276, 283.

‡ A British townlet, with several camps, attendant tumuli, and hollow ways, as well as patches of ancient tillage ground, is situated by the side of the footpath leading from Middleton to Ilderton-Dodd shepherd's house; and similar remains are frequent elsewhere on the hills around, denoting a former dense population. There are also cyclopean walls on the margin of the burn, near the ruinous circle. Old peat mosses exist far up on the back of Cunnion, opposite to Three-stone Burn, excavated not in modern times, but ascribed to the

consisted once, tradition rumoured, of 12 stones, but only 11 of them were visible, and it was foretold that whenever the 12th was found, a fortune in money would reward the lucky discoverer. The present worthy tenant, at the head of a company of hay-makers, whose work in the adjacent *haining* had been interrupted by a shower, instituted a search after the missing pillar, and lo! instead of twelve there were thirteen stones. Thirteen is always an unlucky number, so his painstaking was unremunerated. Perhaps he was not aware that Druid money is only bestowed by reversion in the world to come.* This fact, however, came to light, that all the prostrate stones had fallen from the west, but the cause of this

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dwellers thereabouts in the days of old. Ground broken by like ancient peateries has also been observed on the heights behind Yeavering Bell. Other relics are a horn, not differing from that of the present domestic cattle found while cutting turf for fuel to the south of Three-stone Burn House, and "a sharping stone," lying 18 inches deep, near a place called the Prashy Syke. The stone may have sunk to that depth, but the place was dry and covered with heath when it was found imbedded in peat. It is of the usual form, squarish, seven inches long by one inch broad. It had been "badly sharpened" with, and was rounded, and not flat as now on the sides. It was reckoned to be "burn-stone," is of a grey colour, not unlike some of the greywacke series. Stone celts of greywacke have been turned up near Hetton Hall, so it is not unlikely that this rock likewise may have supplied the "primitive inhabitant" with whetstones. A short stone cist, with bones in it, was disinterred at Carr's Fold, in the direction of Langlee, while rebuilding it some years since.

* "Like money by the Druids borrow'd
In the other world to be restor'd."

Hudibras.

Druidæ pecuniam mutuo accipiebant in posteriore vita reddituri. Patricius, tom. ii. p. 9.

disposition was not ascertained. Some time after the vanished gold promised to reproduce itself in another form. The burn, during its winter impetuosity, rushing against the decomposed granite of its bed, detaches the tarnished specks of mica, which as they are twirled among its eddies, emit a flashing metallic lustre. This was enough to tempt an exploration among the sand and debris, but the illusion of having met with a gold mine among the Cheviot Hills soon passed away, for the scales that were picked up were merely "cat's-gold"—"as far from true gold as a painted fire is from a real."

"Like the Leganian mine,
Where sparkles of golden splendour
All over the surface shine.
But if in pursuit we go deeper,
Allur'd by the gleam that shone,
Ah! false as the dream of the sleeper,
The bright ore is gone."

Moore.

But expectations of subterranean wealth as concomitants of the

"Stones of power
By Druids raised in magic hour,"

can be justified by various precedents. In 1824, a gold sceptre or rod of office, which may have been borne by some ancient arch-priest or king in the great assemblies of his people, was dug up in the circle of Leys, Inverness-shire; and in 1838, a gold ring and an armilla of beaten gold were found in the island of Islay, under a large standing stone. Sometimes it is the key has gone a-missing. Thus "the Hazelrigg Dunnie" loses the key of Bowden-doors, and is "ruined for evermair."

Of Cairn-a-vain, a gigantic pile of stones on one of the Ochill hills in Kinross-shire, it has been prophesied:

> "In the Dryburn well, beneath a stane,
> You'll find the key o' Cairn-a-vain,
> That will mak' a' Scotland rich ane by ane." *

Equally fortunate shall it be with the west of Ireland; where the visions that dazzle the fancy of the half-starved inhabitants compensate for and are created by contrast with the gloomy features of the surrounding scenes; for there lies the Celtic elysium, and the accumulated treasures of centuries. "The inhabitants of Arran More, the largest of the south isles of Arran, on the coast of Galway, are persuaded that in a clear day they can see *Hy Brasail*, the enchanted (or Royal) Island, from the coast, the paradise of the pagan Irish." † On the north-west of the island they call this enchanted country *Tir Hudi*, or the city of Hud, ‡ believing that the city stands there which once possessed all the riches of the world, *and that its key lies buried under some Druidical monument.* When Mr. Burton, in 1765, went in search of the Ogham monument, called Conane's Tomb, on Callan Mountain (also called Callaw

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* Wilson's *Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, pp. 114, 316, 141. Mr. J. F. Campbell, in some remarks on this paper, with which he favoured me, says, "*Cairn-a-vain* may signify cairn of the ore or mine, spelt in the genitive *mhein*, pronounced *Vein* or *Vain* with a nasal sound. This looks more like a fact. The *vein* of some *mine* may be visible at the bottom of an old shaft under a stone." (29th January, 1862.)

† See *West Highland Tales*, vol. iv.

‡ Mr. Campbell notes that this is some corruption; *Tir na h oighe*, the land of youth, is a common name for this Western paradise.

Mountain), the people could not be convinced that the search was made after an inscription, but insisted that he was seeking after an enchanted key that lay buried with the hero, and which, when found, would restore the enchanted city to its former splendour, and convert the moory heights of Callan Mountains into rich and fruitful plains. They expect great riches whenever this city is discovered." *

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* Vallancey's *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis.* Beauford's *Ancient Topography of Ireland.*

XIX.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Plague or Silver Stone.

"Plague or Silver Stones were placed in the vicinity of a town or by the wayside and were used thus. When the plague existed in a town, one of the parties in money transactions, deposited the silver or money in water, in a cavity on the top of the stone, and retired to a distance, while the receiver advanced and took it out, thus preventing contagion.

"The remains of this stone at Hexham was standing in the recollection of an aged lady (my informant), who stated that being taken by her father to walk, when a child, on coming near the Silver Stone she was told to spit upon it, and she would find silver near. Her father contrived to drop a piece of silver, unknown to her, which she readily found, to her surprise and delight. She confessed to have returned some days after, unknown to her father, to the stone, but the spit did not produce the same effect."—*A Guide to the Abbey Church of Hexham*, by Joseph Fairless, p. 17. Hexham, 1853.

Finding of a Horse-shoe.

Near Wooler, when a horse-shoe is found, the holes clear of nails are to be counted, as these indicate how long it is before the party who picked it up is going to be married. Elsewhere

the number of nails remaining indicate luck. Some simple people, it is said, nailed a horse-shoe to the door of a house, that they might always have moonlight, taking the horse-shoe to be the fallen moon.

Bees.

A hive-bee lighting on the hand is fortunate and portends the reception of money.

It is still customary to warn the bees of the death of their master, otherwise they will bring luck no longer. One had seen a piece of the funeral cake placed at the mouth of the hive, which the inmates dragged within with a mournful noise.

Petting Stone. Roping.

Eglingham Church was one of those in former times where there was a "petting stone" for the bride to jump over. At other churches a stool was placed, with a man in attendance at each side, over which they "jumped" the bride and bridegroom by taking hold of their hands and partly lifting them. After the couple were married, and on their way home, they were waylaid, and a rope placed across the street or the road, which it was necessary to leap over, and in order that it might be sufficiently lowered to enable this ceremony to be performed, the holders of the rope claimed a money perquisite. In country places the roping would take place for three times at the least.

O my Mally, inconstant Mallee.

A Northumbrian Song.

"I bought to my Mally, the ribbons of red,
The ribbons I bought her was a crown every yard;
All that I bought her, it still winna' do,
For she to another proved constant and true.
O my Mally, inconstant Mallee!

" I bought to my Mally, the ribbons of silk,
The ribbons I bought her was whiter than milk,
All that I bought her, it still winna do,
For she to another proved constant and true.
O my Mally, inconstant Mallee ! "

This was sung to a simple and rather plaintive air, and was known in the country district near Hexham. The air I know, but it has possibly never been taken down.

Old Toast in North Northumberland.

Mr. W. told me that when a boy he had often heard about Wooler, among country folks, the following toast, but the memory of it had now died out :

" Health, Wealth, Milk, and Meal,
May the Deil,
Rock him weel,
In a creel,
Who doesn't wish us a' weel."

Guisarding Rhymes.

Fragment of a Guisarding Rhyme in South Northumberland.

" O silence, gentlemen, if you would silent be,
Alexander is my name, and I'll sing right cheerfully;
We are six actors young, who never acted before,
And we will do our best, and the best can do no more.
Oh the first that I call in, he is a squire's son,
He's like to lose his true love, because he is too young;
The next that I call in, he is a tailor fine,
What think you of his work, when he made this coat of mine.*

* A coat of many colours and adornments.

O Billy come thee way, with thy valiant spear,
For thou canst act thy part, as well as any here.
* * * *
As we are marching round, think of us what you will,
Fiddler strike up and play, the "Auld Wife of Covershill."

At Wooler, in North Northumberland, children begin guisarding on Halloween night, and continue in going about in separate bands, which call at most of the houses of the town, reciting rhymes, of which I have obtained an example. One enters and recites:

"Redd stocks (*or* sticks), redd stools,
Here comes in a pack of fools;
A pack of fools behind the door,
That was never here before."

Eggs *versus* Cheese.

A man at one time laid a wager that he would eat ever so many eggs, "teens" at least, *i.e.* from thirteen to twenty, every morning in the year; but this diet proved too much for him, and he died before the year was out. He was opened, and a hard substance of the shape of a knife was extracted from his stomach. His brother obtained possession of this, and having got a blade put into it, used it as a knife. Some time after, while labouring in the field, he had bread and cheese to dinner, and he laid the handle of his knife on the cheese and found that it was quite dissolved away. He then made a wager that he would eat twice as many eggs as his brother bargained to do, and on the same conditions. The offer was taken, and he went on with the daily meal of eggs, always eating a piece of cheese after them, and no evil effects resulting, he won the wager. The moral taught was, "Cheese digests everything but itself."

The Druid's Lapfu' and the Devil's Stone.

The standing stone at Yevering in Glendale is a large column of porphyry planted upright in a field at the northern base of the hill called Yevering Bell. It is usually spoken of as indicating a battle, but is in reality prehistoric, there being another, now prostrate, among the old forts and tumuli on the eastern end of the lower slope of that hill.* By the common people it is called the "Druid's Lapfu'." A female Druid's apron string broke there, and the stone dropped out and remained in its present position. Another account is that one of the Druids, who are represented like the Pechs or Picts to have had very long arms, pitched it from the top of the Bell, and it sunk into the soil where it fell.

The "Apron full of stones" was a large heap of stones near Hedgley, removed in 1768 or 1769, supposed by the country people to be the work of the devil. They were found to cover the base and fragments of a cross, which is called in Armstrong's map "Fair Cross."†

The Rev. G. Rome Hall, F.S.A., in the *Archæologia Æliana*, N. S., vol. viii. p. 68 (1879), notices a monolith, twelve feet high, similar to the one still standing at Yevering, by the name of the Devil's Stone or Rock. It stands in the neighbourhood of two ancient British camps, not far from Birtley Holywell, in North Tynedale. "Tradition asserts this to have been the scene of a Satanic leap, the 'very hoof marks' being yet visible on its altar-like summit in the shape of what geologists would call 'pot holes,' a leap intended to result in the demon's descent

* Both stones were standing in Horsley's time (1729-30). Horsley's *Northumberland*, p. 12, and are noticed elsewhere.

† Mackenzie's *Hist. of Northumberland.*

at Lee Hall, on the opposite bank of the river, about half a mile distant; but the interval not being carefully estimated, the consequence was a fall into the deepest abyss of the North Tyne, just below the Countess Park Chuts, thence called the 'Leap-Crag Pool,' where the Satanic personage is said to have been drowned!" *

In a close near Barrasford, on the North Tyne, a cluster of standing stones stood within memory, which have been removed by agricultural operations. The last of them, of basalt, blasted a few years since by gunpowder, yet lies in an inclined position. Beneath the stone fragments of bones and charcoal were found in digging, which would indicate an ancient interment. "It is popularly believed that the series of stones which once stood here were located on the spot, through a duel between two ancient giants, who from their respective stations on the heights east and west of the river hurled these Titanic missiles at each other, which clashed and fell midway, a legend closely resembling that of Brittany, which terms such great stones the quoits or *palets de Gargantua.*" †

Cavern Stories and Pipers' Coves.

The Hurlstone, a sandstone monolith, which stands in a cultivated field on Chillingham Newton Farm, and is supposed to have been an old boundary stone, has already been referred to, as well as the legend attached to it. The late Mr. Tate, of Alnwick, has written a version of it, but others that have appeared more recently in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* newspaper are possibly more exact representations of the

* It is also described by Mr. Hall, in *Arch. Ælian.*, N. S., vii. pp. 10, 11.

† Rev. G. R. Hall, *Arch. Ælian.*, N. S., vii. p. 11.

popular belief. A. Scorer writes, "There is a cavern on Bewick Moor called the 'Cateran's Hole,' which has not been fully explored, although tradition mentions an adventurer proceeding so far that he heard supernatural visitants dancing round the Hurlstone." John Slobbs, London, says, "I suppose this will be a version of a story I heard in the far north many years ago. It was of a cavern, somewhere, and nobody knew where it went to, or where it ended. An adventurous wight made up his mind to solve the difficulty and win renown in his own rustic circle. He therefore took seven years' meat and seven years' candles, or seven days' meat and seven days' candles—I cannot say which exactly, but either will do—and started on his journey. And as happens in all such cases, he travelled and travelled and travelled. And he travelled until he had only one-half of his meat and one half of his candles left. Then he began to consider that if he travelled much further, and did not reach the end of his journey, or an opening to get out of some way, he would neither have meat nor candles to serve him on his road back, and consequently must die there and never more be heard of. And it so happened that whilst he was studying what to do, and quite at a loss to know whether to return or proceed, he heard a voice saying—

'Jee woah agyen
Turn back the stannin' styen.'

And he took it as a warning, and returned to his home and kindred." This writer's impression was that the cavern he had heard of was on Greenside Hill, near Glanton. J. Swinhoe, writing on the same subject, relates: "It was always believed that there was a subterraneous passage clear all the way from Cateran's Hole, on Bewick Moor, to Hell's Hole (more frequently called Hen's Hole), a wild ravine at the foot of Cheviot Hill, and that in the olden, troublous times of Border warfare

it was frequently used both for purposes of offence and defence, for concealment of person and property, and as the means of transporting rieving bands of hostile borderers from the one locality to the other. An adventurer, our wight, made up his mind to test the truth of its existence, and took provisions and candles—whether for seven years or seven days, I cannot exactly tell either—but he travelled on and on until the consumption of half his stock suggested the necessity of returning; and just when he was wondering where he might be, and what he should do, he plainly heard overhead the voice of a ploughman, saying to his horses:

> 'Hup aboot and gee agyeen,
> Roond aboot the Whirlstyen.'"

He states that an acquaintance recently explored the cavern on Bewick Moor, and it ended in something less than forty yards; in no simple obstruction, but solid rock.

There was a different tradition about the termini of this supposed underground passage in Horsley's time. He says that "at Hebburn," which is near Chillingham, and by the crags under which lie Hebburn Wood, behind which stretch wastes of peaty moor, connected with the moorlands that stretch to Bewick, "is a hole called Heytherrie Hole, which people imagine to be an entrance into a subterraneous passage, continued as far as Dunsdale on the west (north rather) side of Cheviot Hill, where there is another hole of the same kind called Dunsdale Hole." *

It is told of "Eelin's Hole," which lies far up among the rocks on the east side of the Henhole Ravine, that a piper having once entered it to explore it, his music continued to be

* Materials for a History of Northumberland, p. 58.

heard for half-way across the interval betwixt it and Cateran's Hole, on Bewick Moor. Like other pipers in a similar predicament, his tune terminated in—

"I doubt, I doubt I'll ne'er win out."

Such a legend we have attached to Windielaw Cove, near Redheugh, on the coast of Berwickshire; and also to some of the caverns near Montrose. Pudding Gyve, in the vicinity of Thurso, is a hollow cove, worn into the solid rock by the ceaseless grinding of the sea. "There is an old tradition of a piper who ventured 'too far ben,' and ultimately lost himself. Many people, good people, heard him long, long after, playing his pipes in a low, hollow sound, some four miles up the country" (Robert Dick, in *Smiles' Life* of that worthy, p. 116). The "Piper's Coe o' Cowend," in the parish of Colvend, in Galloway, has also its musicians, but there is a different set of ideas connected with it. (See Mactaggart's *Gallovidian Encyclopædia*, p. 382.) There is a Piper's Hole on the banks of Peninnis, in St. Mary's, Scilly, which communicates, as tradition saith, with the island of Tresco, where another orifice known by the same name is seen. Strange stories are related of this passage, of men going so far in that they never returned—of dogs going quite through and coming out at Tresco with most of their hair off, and such like incredibles (Heath's *Scilly Isles*). Several who have attempted to penetrate the Fugoe Hole at the Land's End have escaped only by great luck—"by the skin of their teeth," as the saying is. (Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 185.)

Remedies for Hydrophobia.

To cure the bite of a mad dog in South Tynedale, it was usual to send to "Lockerly," on the borders of Scotland, for the

water of some well into which something flying over it had dropt a stone which had communicated curative virtue to the spring. One day, at the place where my informant dwelt, a suspicious-looking dog, which was going "allyin"* about in a field, was induced to come to the stable and was tied up; but the mad fit took it, and it broke loose and bit a weaver's dog and many cattle. A man was forthwith dispatched for Lockerly water; and when it was brought every animal on the place had to taste a little, and the result was that no evil effects ensued from the bites.

Another person had heard of great numbers of cattle, in the county of Durham, being affected with hydrophobia, and a messenger was sent to the borders of Cumberland for a stone, which being placed among water to be given them to drink would have the effect of curing them; but unfortunately the remedy in this particular case failed. The *Gateshead Observer* newspaper, of date March 23rd, 1844, under the heading of "Mad Dogs," stated that during the preceding three months the neighbourhood of Kirkwhelpington and Birtley, in Northumberland, had been much alarmed by visits of dogs in a rabid state, no less than seven having been killed. "We may add that the 'spirit of the age' has not yet banished the popular belief in the virtues of *Lockerlee water*; a large supply having been procured by voluntary subscription. The worming of dogs has likewise been extensively performed." The "Lockerby water" (Dumfriesshire) appears to have been intended, for which see Mr. Henderson's *Folklore of the Northern Counties*, p. 163; the confusion in the name arising from the similar qualities of the far-famed Lockhart of Lee Penny.

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* To move or run from side to side. In North Northumberland the word is *sallyin'*, signifying sauntering, getting on slowly with work; also *ailyin*, wasting time.

I am enabled, from former personal acquaintance with a relative of the late Mr. Turnbull, to whom the Hume-byres Penny belonged, to give some additional particulars of its history to those contained in Mr. Henderson's work, *ubi supra*. It was called the Black Penny, possibly in contradistinction to a silver or white penny. It was left to Mr. T. by an aunt as an heirloom. The following was said to be its origin. A cow, or as others say all the cattle, was bitten at a place by a mad dog, and a consultation was held whether she should be slaughtered or undergo a course of medicine. Perplexity was removed by a crow in the hour of extremity fetching the penny in its mouth and dabbling it amongst water to show how it was to be rendered efficacious. Mr. T. lent it to a person near Morpeth, and having lost faith in its virtues, never took the trouble of recalling it. Mr. T.'s nephew, who as well as him has now been dead for many years, wrote me thus on the subject, 25th April, 1843: "The magical penny which Mr. Turnbull had was not quite so large as a common penny, but thicker. It had a kind of raised rim or border, and seemed to be composed of copper and zinc. It had been in the family for a hundred years at least. The family lived at Hadden, near Sprouston, when they got it. It had been several times given out, and once a purse containing gold, but to what amount was not known, was left as a deposit for its safe return. In Northumberland and Yorkshire much credit was given to its powers. Mr. T. has a letter of thanks, but I have not yet prevailed on him to search for it. Upon one occasion a Yorkshireman came to Hume-byres on his master's account for the penny; and fearing that Mr. T. might not part with it, he was provided with barrels to carry the healing water; but, unfortunately for him, the penny was not at Hume-byres, but at Northbank, near Linlithgow; however, he extended his ride and procured it. I think it was his master who returned a letter of thanks. The last person who got it away, fifteen years

ago, wrote to Mr. T. saying he had returned it by post; but that is doubted. His address is as follows: Mr. Thomas Millburn, Parish of Bothal, Bothal, Ogle, North Seaton. The gentleman for whose cattle it was got was John Saddler, Esq., Tritlington." [In Mackenzie's *Hist. of Northumberland*, ii. pp. 149, 150, it is said: "Tritlington, Hebron Chapelry, Morpeth, is situated about 1¾ miles north-east of Hebron, and one mile east from the great post road. Here is an old hall," &c. "Near to this old hall a neat mansion house was lately erected by Mr. John Sadler, who from a humble beginning has, by his agricultural knowledge and exemplary industry, risen to opulence, and acquired a valuable estate here."] "When I was inquiring about it, there was a cattle-dealer at Hume-byres who was about a fortnight since making the same inquiry at Morpeth and Wooler. He found the circumstances of the penny belonging to Mr. Turnbull having been in that neighbourhood fresh in the memory of some of the inhabitants."

The belief in the "mad-stone" extends to America. In Hardwicke's *Science Gossip* for September, 1871, vol. vii. p. 213, there is a quotation from a New York paper to this effect: "Five children, three white and two black, were bitten by a mad dog in Pulaski, Tenn., one day last week. Mad-stones were applied promptly to the white children, it is said, with the desired effect, all of them being now well and safe, while the negro children, to whom the mad-stone was not applied, have gone mad. The account says there were several mad-stones in the neighbourhood." In the same work, for January, 1872, vol. viii. p. 20, Dr. Josiah Curtis, Knoxville, Tennessee, writes that there is a popular belief in America that certain stones possess the power of averting hydrophobia from persons bitten by rabid dogs, and it is quite widespread. "It mostly prevails among the unlearned and superstitious, but is not confined to such. A very respectable lady in Richmond,

Va., has one of these so-called mad-stones, in which she has implicit faith, and I have known a reputable physician in Illinois who fully believed in their efficacy. There are no special localities where these stones are found, nor is there anything very peculiar in their appearance."

Mr. George Henderson, in his *Popular Rhymes of Berwickshire*, p. 23, mentions a very recent instance of a healing stone, that might have become famous had the popular belief in such cures not been superseded by the skilled veterinary. "There is," he says, "or was, a locality near Ayton called the Corbie-heugh, because of the number of corbies (ravens or carrion-crows) that were wont to breed there in former times. Our great-grandfather lived in Ayton about 1730, and he got into his possession an article of *glamourie* which he took out of a corbie's nest, in the Corbie-heugh, which is said to have wrought many miraculous cures both on man and beast. It is only a few years since this talisman, which was a small triangular piece of glass or transparent stone, was in our keeping, but it is now lost." In a letter of date October 11, 1861, Mr. Henderson writes: "The corbie's stone was about the size of a pigeon's egg, and of that thickness, but more elongated. It was of a whitish colour—not so white as our common chucky stones (quartz), and almost opaque. It was said to have cured the Laird of Kimmerghame's cattle of some pestilential disease, by being laid in the pond out of which they drank." The corbie may have mistaken the stone for an egg, and carried it off. From its thickness it could not have been an elf-arrow head, which was in Ireland, sometimes "boiled with some reep halfpence in drink for the suffering creature." *

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* Dr. W. R. Wilde, *North. Brit. Agriculturist*, October 23, 1861, p. 1058.

Stewart Hall, in the parish of Rothesay, Isle of Bute, formerly the seat of the Stewarts of Kilwhineloch, was once "the repository of certain *blessed stones* considered invaluable in curing man and beast, under 'the blink o' an ill e'e.'" In like manner "the milk of cows, which witches took away, returned freely as ever, when they got a certain drink in which those stones had been boiled."* More might be said about curing stones.

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* Wilson's *Guide to Rothesay and the Isle of Bute*, p. 67.

XX.

BORDER SKETCHES AND FOLKLORE.

On Covin, Coban, or Capon Trees.

Dr. Jamieson, in his Scottish Dictionary, says, that in Roxburghshire, the *covin-tree* signifies "a large tree in front of an old Scottish mansion-house, where the laird always met his visitors." A corruption of it is supposed to be "coglan-tree." He derives it from the French *convent*, convention or agreement; which, again, is from the Latin *conventum*, a covenant, or *conventus*, an assembly. *Covent*, Anglo-Norman, is a covenant or agreement in "Morte Arthure." The witches of Auldearn met in covines, and the prettiest of them was called the Maiden of the Covine. The covin-tree is thus a variety of the trysting-tree, whose name and functions as the place of summons in the old "Riding" era, as the spot where rural lovers met and plighted troth, or where the exchangers of services and commodities held and still hold their convention, are indelibly impressed upon northern language and literature. Sir Walter Scott, in a note to his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, p. 277, holds the same view as Dr. Jamieson. "The tree near the front of an antient castle was called the *covine-tree*, probably because the lord received his company there."

"He is lord of the hunting-horn,
And king of the Covine-tree;
He's well lov'd in the western waters,
But best of his ain Minnie."

When on a visit to Alnwick in summer, 1861, I found it to

be well understood that a tree, called there a coban or covan tree, once stood before every castle (within a bowshot of Alnwick Castle for instance), and it was there the lord met his guests. And there used to be, and still is, a rhyme having reference to it, sung by young girls, while playing at "keppy ball," against a tree. From the time they can keep up the ball, they also divine their future prospects as to matrimony or spinster life.

"Keppy ball, keppy ball, Coban-tree,
Come down the lang loanin' and tell to me,
The form and the features, the speech and degree,
Of the man that is my true lover to be.

"Keppy ball, keppy ball, Coban-tree,
Come down the lang loanin' and tell to me,
How many years old (name) is to be—
One a maiden, *two* a wife,
Three a maiden, *four* a wife," &c.

And so on, the odds for the single, the even numbers for the married state, as long as the ball can be kept rebounding against the tree round which they play. The Scottish covin and the Northumbrian coban trees are thus identical.

But there is another class of trees, that has puzzled both antiquarians and county historians, that ought, I think, to be coupled with these. These are the capon-trees; for *v*, *b*, and *p*, are letters mutually interchangeable in European languages. One of these capon-trees, a venerable oak, in a very decayed state, stands by the highway near to Brampton, Cumberland, and fulfilled, it is to be remarked, the office of a tree of meeting. "It obtained its name from the judges being formerly met here by javelin men, well armed and mounted, from Carlisle, who, in addition to the armour on their backs, were further loaded with a goodly number of *cold capons;* and here, under the spreading branches of this once stately tree, did the learned judges and their body-guard partake of this food." (Denham's *Cumber-*

land Rhymes and Proverbs, p. 11.) Tradition makes amusing mistakes in the etymology of local names. The only other, and by far the most famous capon-tree that I know of, stands on the property of the Marquis of Lothian, near Jedburgh. Mr. Oliver, of Longraw, in a letter of 3rd April, 1855, states: "It has its name, tradition says, from its having been the roosting-place of the *capons* belonging to the monks of Jedburgh Abbey. From the shape of the tree, I think the word *capen* is literally *coped*, topped. It has a short stem, and a wide-spreading umbrageous top or *cope*." But this is the characteristic of many other trees besides the capon-tree. Another Roxburghshire friend suggests the "kepping," or trysting-tree; but this is not likely, when there is a term in the language appropriate to trysting-trees with a special function such as this may have once possessed. Two other derivations have been proposed by Mr. Jeffrey. In vol. i. p. 48 of his *History and Antiquities of Roxburghshire* he thus mentions it: "The banks of the river Jed, as it winds round Prior's haugh, are dotted with fine old wood, and at the foot of the haugh, on the south margin, stands a large oak, called the capon-tree. It is thought that the tree derives its name from the Capuchin friars, who delighted to wander amid such lovely scenes, and linger beneath the shade of the wide-spreading oaks. The haugh on which the tree stands belonged to the monastery, and was named after the prior. The tree measures twenty-one feet above the roots; about ten feet up it divides itself into two branches, which measure respectively eleven feet and a half, and fourteen feet. It is between seventy and eighty feet high, and covers fully an area of ninety-two feet." J. Grigor, in *Morton's Cyclopædia of Agriculture*, vol. ii. p. 477, says: "The circumference of its trunk two feet from the ground is twenty-six feet. The height of the tree is fifty-six feet, and the space occupied by the spread of its boughs is nearly a hundred feet in diameter." Mr. Jeffrey, in his second volume, p. 260,

corrects himself as to the origin of the name. "I am now satisfied that the tree derives its name from its remarkable resemblance to the hood worn by monks of Jedburgh, and which was called *a capon*." Calling pictorial representation to his aid, his artist figures the capon-tree, with two monks in hoods, wielding sheep-crooks, conferring under the tree, if the accompaniments are not allegorical, about the points of fat beeves, and the prices of wool and mutton—an occupation more correspondent to their historical character than any romantic predilection, like the Lady Grace of Sir John Vanbrugh, for a cool retreat from the noon-day's sultry heat under a great tree. In what language *capon* signifies a friar's cowl, Mr. J. does not inform his readers. Capuchon, capuce, or capuche (Latin caputium) are the customary terms; but neither they nor their derivative, Capuchin, resemble *capon*. Relying then on analogy, we continue in the opinion, that the capon-tree was the covin-tree of the Prior of Jedburgh, who, like other heads of religious houses, had the rank and attributes of nobility.

A poetical address to the capon-tree, which was contributed to *Hogg's Instructor* (2nd Series), ii. p. 8, by William Oliver, Esq., of Longraw, embodies the striking vicissitudes of which during the troublous ages of past history this aged tree may have stood a silent witness:—

"TO THE CAPON-TREE.

"Old Capon-tree, old Capon-tree,
Thou standest telling of the past,
Of Jedworth's forest wild and free
Thou art alone, forsaken, last.
Thou witness of dark ages gone,
Ere time doth lay his scythe to thee,
I fain would know what thou hast known,
Thou sere and time-worn Capon-tree.

"Jed 'wander'd at its own sweet will,'
When thy green spring-time first began ;
The wolf's lone howl the glades would fill,
As through their moonlit depths he ran.
The antler'd deer with ears alert,
Would listen to his deadly foe,
Then bound away, with panting heart,
O'er ridge of oak, through brake of sloe.

"Say, did'st thou flourish when those bands,
The Eternal City's legion'd ones,
Did strike their prows 'gainst Albyn's sands,
To combat with her savage sons?
And did the breeze, as passing by,
It whisper'd through the spreading boughs,
Bear on the Roman battle-cry,
And answering shriek of painted foes?

"And did the startled deer upspring
From thy wide top's far-spreading shade?
And did the wild bull's bellow ring
Through forest, scaur, and tangled glade,
As that unwonted battle-cry
The breeze through Jedworth's forest bore?
Now forest, Roman, all gone by;
Rome's tongue—a memory—no more!

"The hoary Druid bless'd thy shade,
And held thee sacred, mystic tree ;
What were the gods to whom he pray'd?
What sort of faith had he in thee?
Hast thou e'er seen the sacred knife—
The breast of human victim bared?
Or, when the blood ebb'd with his life,
His agonized shrieking heard?

"Old Capon-tree, thou must have seen
That, of all creatures on this earth,
Man to his kind has falsest been
And cruelest; yet there is mirth,
And joy, and love, and goodness much;
Oh! would that in a world so fair,
The beautiful man's heart might touch—
That crime-born sorrow were more rare!

"Rough savage hordes, with stealthy stride,
Have wander'd 'mid thy brethren hoar;
And many a host, in warlike pride,
Has pass'd thee in the days of yore.
And holy monk and castellane,
And knight and baron debonair,
Have mingled in the glancing train,
With courtly prince and lady fair.

"Ah! did'st thou see that hapless queen,
The fair, the wrong'd, not blameless Mary!
She wander'd sure, 'mong paths so sheen,
When at fair Jedworth she would tarry;
And did the fays among thy boughs
Not pine to see their charms surpass'd?
Ah! sunk beneath most cruel woes.
Unenvied was her fate at last!

"'Twas in yon glen * that Richmond's knight
Was caught by Douglas in the toil;
In vain were numbers, valour, might—
The well-plann'd ambush all could foil;
Entrapp'd and conquer'd all, or slain,
It was the Southron's fate to yield,
And Douglas from his king did gain
Another blazon to his shield.

* This glen is about a quarter of a mile from the capon-tree.

"Old Ferniherst,* whose battled keep
Still towers embosom'd in the woods,
Where, now, all warlike echoes sleep,
Has rung to sounds of Border feuds;
The English, Scotch, and Frenchman's† shout,
The clang of arms, the victim's wail,
The din of onslaught, siege, and rout,
Have sped along thy native vale.

"With thee, old tree, I live again,
To wander through Jed's forest wide,
To see the mail-clad warrior train
Upon some Border foray ride;
To hear the clang of hound and horn,
See falcon's stoop, and heron's wile;
Hear matin-chime, at grey-eyed morn,
From fair St. Mary's‡ hallow'd pile.

"Sweet Jedworth! nestling in the vale,
Surrounded by the forest lone,
Thy beauties grac'd the minstrel's tale,
And oft to princely guests were known:
No princes now with thee remain,
Thy ancient woods are wede away;
The winds sweep through thy ruin'd fane,
And monks and abbots where are they?

"I love not the unsparing hate
That would all ancient things reject;
Nothing that e'er has been held great,
Or good, or true, deserves neglect;
And though we many errors find,
These errors, once, were view'd as sooth,—
Were labours of the human mind
Struggling, as mind is yet, for truth.

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* Ferniherst Castle stands half a mile from the tree.
† A.D. 1549. ‡ Jedburgh Abbey.

"The human ocean-stream rolls on,
With hidden depths, and ceaseless tide;
A single wave, now ages gone,
Will never, in effect, subside;
But still, though all unmark'd by man,
Will modify the heaving whole:
Some acted thought, through all life's span,
Shall tincture ev'ry living soul.

"And now, old Capon-tree, farewell!
There is an awe bred by the thought
That thou, with silent tongue, dost tell
Of swarming millions grave-ward brought—
Fallen as thou hast shed thy leaves!
That glory, honour, gladness, shame—
That ev'ry passion which still heaves
The breast, was and will be the same."

"Our Capon-tree," says Mr. Hilson, in his *Guide to the Scenery and Antiquities of Jedburgh*, "is one of the noblest objects in Jed Water. It stands on a little meadow terminating at the third bridge. It is told of John Foster, the celebrated essayist, that he had a peculiar respect for old trees, and with a pleasantry scarcely his own, designated them 'fine old fellows.' There are few who have not shared in the feelings of reverence for the more ancient members of the forest race. While other objects around them recall the passing away of time, they, in a striking degree, suggest the train of pensive reflection. The dismantled castle may present the memorial of olden times, telling the tale of mutation and change; but a venerable tree has a moral which the dead and inert remains of lifeless strength do not suggest. In the budding, and blossoming, and decline, and in the removal of growth, there is something akin to that human life, with whose progress it may have kept company through long generations of history.

There is something inspiring to the mind in the sight of the monarch of the wood—the oak of a thousand years, casting its arms aloft, and wooing the influence of light and air with the eagerness of the tender sapling. Its castle-like strength of trunk, its massy boughs and doddered angles, its freaks of growth, its bourgeoning world of leaf and branch, spreading far away from the central trunk—the strong but graceful balance of the whole—when seen, as in the Capon-tree, form as noble an object as Nature's out-of-door world presents."

Alnwick Mercury, July 1, 1862.

Whittingham Vale.

"Now I gain the mountain's brow,
What a landscape lies below."—*Dyer*.

Many of our Northumbrian hills, vales, and villages present pleasing pictures of rural life, calculated to inspire our hearts with love for our native land. They are filled with the elements of poetry; for not only are the external features beautiful, but they are also the scenes of historic events and old-world legends which people them, as it were, with the busy life of other generations. Englishmen travel into distant lands in search of the wonderful and picturesque, and often leave unvisited richer scenes near to their own homes. Let them wander through the vale of Whittingham, and then say where they will find more charming views and more interesting associations.

Whittingham is but a small village on the banks of the Aln, which is here a tiny brook; yet it stands in the midst of memorials of other times; in the fortlets on the adjoining hills, and in the old weapons found near them, we see footprints of the ancient British people; the Roman has left his wonderful roads, the Saxon his church, and the Norman his pele tower.

From Simeon, who wrote his history of the church of Durham

in the twelfth century, we learn that Hwittingham was in existence in A.D. 737 and belonged to Ceolwulph king of Northumberland. The name is Saxon, derived from *Hwiting*, a personal name, and the common termination *ham*, a town or village, being the town or village of Hwiting. During this troubled period, when England was divided into several distinct kingdoms constantly at war with each other, the seeming peacefulness and security of the cloister tempted many to devote themselves to a religious life, and take refuge in monasteries. According to the Venerable Bede, nobles as well as private persons left the study of martial discipline and became monks. Ceolwulph, a listless and inactive king, was smitten with the prevailing mania, and after reigning eight years, he resigned his crown to his nephew, Eadbert, and entered as a monk the monastery of Lindisfarne; he enriched it by his beneficence; milk and water had previously been the beverage of the monks, but to gladden their hearts he introduced wine; he brought with him kingly treasures and lands and bestowed upon it the villages of Bregesne (Brainshaugh, near Warkworth) and Wercewede (Warkworth), with all their appendages and with the churches which he had built there; and besides these, four other villages, Wudcestre, Hwitingham (Whittingham), Eadulfingham (Edlingham), and Eagwlfingham (Eglingham). Truly royal gifts to a church. No mention is here made of a church at Whittingham, but there can be little doubt that one was built there about this period, or not long afterwards, for the present church still retains distinctive work of Saxon times. Twenty-two years ago such early remains were more extensive; but unfortunately much of the old Saxon work was destroyed in 1840, when the church was repaired and altered.

Undoubted Saxon remains are few in North Northumberland; not even the foundations of dwelling houses, towers, or castles

can be traced. Constructed for the most part of wood and clay, the houses were frail and perishable; but the contempt and hostility felt by the proud Normans towards the conquered Saxons led to the destruction of many monuments of Saxon art; while the fell swoop of the ruthless conqueror, when he wasted and destroyed Northumberland by fire and sword, would reduce all to ruin. Our Saxon relics are all ecclesiastical. Part of the shaft of a Saxon cross supports the font in Rothbury Church; other fragments of Saxon crosses are at Warkworth and Lindisfarne; and several sculptured stones, remains of the Norham Saxon church, are built up into a pillar in Norham churchyard. But the most interesting relic of the period was taken from Alnmouth Church, and is now preserved in Alnwick Castle Museum; it is a sculptured cross, with an inscription partly in rude Roman letters and partly in Runic characters. Formerly many of the works of Norman builders were attributed to the Saxons—Alnwick Castle was Saxon, Lindisfarne Priory and other churches with circular arches were represented to be Saxon; but all such are now known to belong to a later period. And here we may indicate the characters of the Saxon style as seen in churches. It was founded on the Roman type, but of a rude kind, like the imitations made of the works of a civilised people by a race little advanced in art. The masonry of the walls was a rough irregular rubble, or rag, formed indiscriminately of large and small stones and united with a coarse cement; this rubble was sometimes set, as in Sompting Church, in a framework of narrow vertical strips of stone, extending through the thickness of the wall, and projecting a little beyond it, representing as it were the wooden framework used in constructing the frailer ordinary dwelling houses. At the corners of the towers there was a peculiar quoining, called long and short work, which consisted of a long stone set upright at the corner, and a short one laid on it and bonding one way or both

into the wall. Arches, when large, were semicircular, and rested on a rude impost; and mouldings were flat and simple; the windows were small, usually with semicircular and sometimes with triangular headings; but those in the belfry were highly characteristic, for the small windows were double, being divided by a rude balustre set back a little from the front. All these peculiarities are not to be seen in any one building now remaining; and it is only some of them that appeared in Whittingham Church. Rickman gives a brief account of this church, and a drawing of the tower, as they existed before modern alterations had marred their peculiar and interesting features. At that period, the west end of the aisles and one arch on the north appeared of the same early Saxon style of architecture; the corners of the tower and the exterior angles of the aisle wall had "the long and short work;" in the upper stage of the tower there was a double window, the division being made by a rude balustre, and in the lower stage there was another original window with an heading formed by two inclined stones; and a very plain arch with a large rude impost and a plain square pier remained in the nave. But of these peculiar features there only remain the lower part of the tower, which still shows externally the characteristic Saxon long and short work, and internally portions of a rude double circular arch in the eastern wall. Notwithstanding the storms of eleven centuries have broken over this old tower, the rubble masonry and quoins built of the gritty sandstone of the district are but little decayed; and now, when there is a greater respect felt for old memorials, may we not hope that, as time has dealt kindly with this tower, man may hereafter lay no ruthless hand on what is left. There is no such old relic in North Northumberland; it is an architectural type adopted by our early forefathers—an unwritten historical record—and we ought not to be deprived of its teachings and associations.

Leaving the church, we turn aside and meet with a memorial of another period in a strong Border pele, with a vaulted under story, and with walls eight feet in thickness. An original entrance, and a window on the east, evidence that it is an Edwardian structure of the fourteenth century. In a Survey made by Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Raufe Ellerker, in December, 1542, two towers were then in a good state. "At Whyttingam," say they, "bene two towers whereof one ys the mansion of the vycaridge and the other of the Inheritance of Rb't Collingwood Esquier both in measurable good repar'ons."

These massive square fortresses, now picturesque objects in a peaceful country, recall the period when life and property were insecure from Scottish marauders who lived by plunder. In 1460 there were thirty-seven castles and seven or eight of these pele towers in Northumberland. Without such protection men could not live in the district; and indeed one extensive lordship, the Kidland, was entirely untenanted because there was no tower for its protection. This state of insecurity continued down even to a comparatively late period. Lord Wharton reported on 20th March, 1556, that "the Liddledayle horsemen in the nighte burnte a house a young woman and 16 noute in the same; and hurt the owner and two other." "The 16th I began," continues he, "the Wardaine court at Alnewik Castle, whear was arraigned James Crosser, Ed. Cross, Robert Graye, Skotts, and Andrewe Noble, Englise rebbele, who confessed their offenses openly. Ed. Cross, Grey, and Noble suffered, and Noble's head was set upon a tower's gait at the towne of Alnewik." "A Book of the losses of the middle marches by the Scotts Theuves, presented at Alnwick on 16 April, 1586, gives the names of 37 townes and villages that have been most spoiled in this tyme of peace; and all or the most parte of them ar within 6 miles of Sir John Forster's dwelling-house and within his office." Then follows a large number of complaints

with a special account of the losses sustained. The following is an example—"goods taken out of the Lordship of Bewick by the Scotts—est Lilborne, 16 horse and mares, 42 kyne and oxen, 17 score sheep and 20 marks worth of insight (*household goods*). New Bewick 30 oxen and kyne, 13 score of sheepe, and insight worth 20 marks." A darker picture is drawn of the period by Sir William Bowes in a letter to Sir R. Cecill, January, 1596. "The distrested people are in despair and the country miserable from the horrible murders and incorrigible pride and disobedience of the ravenous malefactors. Touching murders, I cannot yet come by the certane number, but the number is great, the manner horrible; killing men in their beds. I take it that Buckbage will be found guiltye of murthers above 20; Sir Robert Carr 16. The Bournes and Younge, in revenge of their feede (*feud*) for one of their name chaunceably slayne in England by Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, his man rescuing from him a poore man's goodes, have murdered 35 Collingwoods." The value of the spoyles committed by the Scots in 1587 was estimated at £92,969 6s. 7d.—a great sum in those days.

A remarkable order was made in 1561 for fortifying the Borders—little closes or crofts were to be enclosed of lands next adjoining every town or village, none to be more than two acres or less than half an acre, so that the towns might be strengthened, free passage prevented, except by narrow ways, hedges and ditches, where a few men may resist and annoy many—the ways between enclosures were to be narrow and crooked, that an enemy or a thief may be met at corners and annoyed by the bow; these ways were to be made by tenants, farmers, and owners, well ditched with a ditch 4 feet deep and 6 feet broad, with a double set of quicks and some ashes. The great remedy, however, in these dismal times was hanging, and many of the Carrs, Youngs, Bournes, Armstrongs, and Elliotts endured this penalty for

their lawlessness. The union of the two kingdoms under one monarchy brought this period of rapine and bloodshed to a close; and when we look back upon these horrors we may feel thankful for the freedom and security now enjoyed in the Border lands.

The ownership of Whittingham in the middle ages was often changed. In John's reign it was held along with Thrunton, Ryle, and Barton, by Michael, the son of Michael; in Edward I.'s reign, Robert of Glanton held three parts of it with the half of Glanton; and in the same reign the family of Flamvill had possession of it, one half being held in capite from the king by service of a sparrow-hawk yearly, and the other half on a tenure peculiar to the ancient kingdom of Northumberland, called drengage, the lowest tenure giving a permanent claim to land, but placing the holder only as a half freeman between the free tenant and villain, for he was obliged to render servile duties in ploughing, harrowing, and sowing his lord's lands. The term is from the Anglo-Saxon *dreogan*, to work; and it is still preserved in the word *drudge*, applied to a person who performs the lowest kinds of labour. After passing through various changes, the property was in the seventeenth century held by the Border family of Collingwoods; but George Collingwood, having joined the cause of the Stuarts in 1715, he was executed at Liverpool, and his estates were forfeited to the Crown, from whom they were purchased by Liddell of Ravensworth; and they are now held by his descendant, the present Lord Ravensworth.

Leaving the village, we pass through the great Thrunton Wood, which has an area of 1,500 acres, on to the Thrunton Crags, crossing in our route the branch Roman road, which joined the Devil's Causeway a little eastward of Whittingham, and which passing along the base of the Crags, and away by Holystone, extended to Watling Street, thus connecting the two

great roads which, during the Roman occupation, traversed the county.

The crags are sandstone, and in some parts rise as cliffs to the height of one and two hundred feet. There are great rents in these rocks and tumbled-down masses, which here and there form caverns. One of these is Wedderburn's Cave, another bears the name of the Priest's Cave. In times of disturbance and insecurity, when the borders, especially, were subject to plundering and slaughter, such caverns may have been used as hiding places, and have taken their name from the persons who found refuge in them. Some persecuted minister of religion may have found temporary safety in the Priest's Cave, and possibly a freebooting Wedderburn may have escaped death by concealment in the dark recess which bears his name.

The ascent through the wood to the top of the crags is very steep, but the toil is rewarded by the magnificent view enjoyed over the Whittingham vale. Resting on the summit for a while, we scan over the varied and beautiful features of the scene, and trace the boundary of the geological formations which have impressed their character on the district. The fine conical forms of the porphyritic hills, belonging to the Cheviot range, are seen rolling into each other at the head of the valley. A mass of this rock protrudes like a promontory as far eastward as the Ryles, and northward in a deep bay we have old red sandstone conglomerate; some patches of the Tuedian or lower carboniferous group are in the lower grounds at Garmitage and Crawley Dene. From beneath the sandstone hill on which we rest, there comes out one of the lowest limestones of the mountain limestone group, and in one of the shales, interstratified with it, we found a species of Modiola. The thick beds of sandstone forming the great crags of Thrunton belong to the same formation, and are a continuation of the ridge which, after bounding the valley of

the Till and Breamish at Doddington, Ros Castle, and Bewick, sweeps round by Beanley and Alnwick Moor to Thrunton, and thence in a southerly direction over the bleak upland moors of Northumberland. The broad vale which lies beneath is highly cultivated, adorned with woods, and studded over with halls, villages, and hamlets, forming indeed one of the most beautiful and diversified scenes in Northumberland.

On the Thrunton Crags, the falcons some time ago built their nests and brought forth their young: but they have been driven from their home by the incessant persecutions of gamekeepers, who ruthlessly shot them as "vermin." Any nobleman might be proud of having such tenants of his rocks, and surely the few rabbits or partridges which might be taken for food should not be grudged, in order that this noble bird may not altogether disappear from our district.

Callaley Castle Hill is a detached rugged sandstone hill of the same range, somewhat conical in form and densely shrouded with wood. The summit, which is an irregular and broken plain of about two acres, is the site of an old camp, which like most of our early fortlets is rounded in form, but modified to suit the outline of the ground. The rampiers and ditches are in some parts very distinct, and the height from the bottom of the ditch to the top of the rampier is, on the west side, twenty feet. On the north side the escarpment of the hill is very steep, and there is but one rampier; but there are two on the other sides, and there is a third at a distance of about one hundred yards down the hill on the west side, whence an attack could most easily be made. The ditch in some parts is cut deeply into the sandstone rock. Two entrances are traceable nearly opposite to each other, that on the W.S.W. side crosses the deep ditch by means of a causeway. This fortlet is remarkable, not only for its strong position and the skilful construction of its entrench-

ments, but also for the peculiarity of its inner rampier, which in some parts is formed of stones roughly squared, built up, and even bedded with lime; and in this it differs from most fortlets attributable to the ancient British people, for their rampiers are usually made of undressed stones and earth. Probably this, originally a Celtic camp, was afterwards occupied by another people, who reconstructed with more art the inner wall. The Romans may for a time have occupied it, for one of the Roman roads passes at a short distance.

Callaley House stands at the base of the hill on low ground on the site of an ancient pele tower; and it is the subject of a curious Northumbrian legend, which very probably had its origin in the apparent remains of extensive buildings on the Castle Hill.

The legend is briefly told thus:—

A lord of Callaley in the days of yore commenced erecting a castle on this hill; his lady preferred a low sheltered situation in the vale. She remonstrated; but her lord was wilful, and the building continued to progress. What she could not attain by persuasion she sought to achieve by stratagem, and availed herself of the superstitious opinions and feelings of the age. One of her servants who was devoted to her interests entered into her scheme; he was dressed up like a boar, and nightly he ascended the hill and pulled down all that had been built during the day. It was soon whispered that the spiritual powers were opposed to the erection of a castle on the hill; the lord himself became alarmed, and he sent some of his retainers to watch the building during the night, and discover the cause of the destruction. Under the influence of the superstitions of the times, these retainers magnified appearances, and when the boar issued from the wood and commenced overthrowing the work of the day, they beheld a monstrous animal of enormous power. Their terror was complete when the boar,

standing among the overturned stones, cried out in a loud voice—

> "Callaly Castle built on the height,
> Up in the day and down in the night;
> Builded down in the Shepherd's Shaw,
> It shall stand for aye and never fa'.

They immediately fled and informed the lord of the supernatural visitation; and regarding the rhymes as an expression of the will of heaven, he abandoned the work, and in accordance with the wish of his lady built his castle low down in the vale, where the modern mansion now stands.—George Tate, F. G. S., in *Alnwick Mercury*, August 1, 1862.

Traditions of Meg of Meldon.

Old Man. "And hast thou never, in the twilight, fancied
Familiar object, some strange shape
And form uncouth?"
Thalaba. "Aye! many a time." Southey.

Seldom has the county historian stooped from his curt and often dry collocation of dates and facts long since forgotten to notice what his reader would more thankfully appreciate, the alleged spiritual occupants that rendered many a spot much more memorable than he, with all his piled-up researches, can ever hope for. More learned and more elaborate than most of those who have engaged in such laborious works, the last and best historian of Northumberland, the Rev. John Hodgson, of Hartburn, never overlooked those romances of uncultivated

minds; but was careful to enshrine them amidst the data of charter chests and public records, where they reward the reader, like a dash of verdure amidst rocks hoary with the hues of time. Had he not told us, we should never very well have known why "Meg of Meldon" was stigmatised as a witch while she was alive, and continued to be a ghost so long as there lingered any belief in spiritual beings commissioned to walk the earth after the sun had gone to rest.

"Meg of Meldon," he says, "would seem to have been Margaret Selby, mother of Sir William Fenwick, of Meldon, who distinguished himself as a royalist in the civil wars, and died in May, 1652. She was a daughter of William Selby, Esq., of Newcastle, and brought to her husband, Sir William Fenwick, of Wallington, a considerable fortune, which, being mortgaged upon Meldon (then belonging to the Herons), was the cause of that manor passing into the possession of the Fenwick family. On the decease of her husband she resided at Hartington Hall, and is represented to have been a miserly, pitiless, money-getting matron. In a picture of her, which was at Seaton Delaval in 1810 (she having been related to the Delaval family, who also had a portrait of her at Ford Castle), she was habited in a round hat, with a large brim tied down at each ear, and in a stiff gown turned up nearly to the elbows, with a vandyked sleeve of linen; the whole shoulders were covered with a thickly-gathered ruff or frill." "She is represented," says Mackenzie, "in the costume of a witch, with a high-pointed hat; her nose is crooked, her eyes penetrating, and her whole countenance indicates that superior acuteness, intelligence, and strength of mind, which being so uncommon among an ignorant and barbarous people, acquired her the character by which she is distinguished." * "The investment of her fortune in the

* Mackenzie's *Hist. of Northumberland*, ii. p. 394.

mortgage of Meldon, and the hard case of the young Heron being forced to join in conveying the ancient seat and lands of his ancestors to her son, were circumstances likely enough to cause a strong popular feeling in favour of the ousted heir, and as strong a hatred to his wealthy oppressors."

But besides this drawback to her popularity, Mr. Robert White says, "An opinion is generally entertained by the sagacious people in the neighbourhood that Meg was possessed of a large amount of money besides that which she invested on the manor of Meldon; and being ever desirous of turning it to account, she frequently laid out heavy sums on such commodities as could be disposed of again to advantage. Amongst these she is said to have dealt largely in corn; and being enabled, when prices were low, to make extensive purchases, she would, when a rise in the market took place, realise thereby a proportional profit."

"In addition to her hoarding propensities," continues Mr. Hodgson, "tradition reports that she was a witch, and, being a person of considerable celebrity in her day, she has since her death continued the subject of many a winter evening's ghost tale. She used to go between Meldon and Hartington Hall by a subterraneous coach road, and the entry at Hartington into this underground way was by a very large whinstone in the Hart, called the *battling stone*, upon which people used to beat or *battle* the lie out of their webs in the bleaching season. As a retribution for her covetous disposition and practice in unearthly arts, her spirit was condemned to wander seven years and rest seven years alternately. During the season she had to *walk* she was the terror of the country from Morpeth to Hartington Hall. She frequented those places where she had bestowed her hoarded treasure; but always abandoned them when the pelf was discovered and turned to useful purposes. Many nights of watching and penance are said to have been spent over a well

a little to the south-east of Meldon Tower, where she had deposited a bull's hide full of gold. The most frequent scene of her midnight vagaries was about Meldon Bridge, along the battlements of which she was often seen running in the form of a little dog. Another of her haunts was in an ancient stone coffin on the site of Newminster Abbey, where those who had the gift of seeing ghosts have seen her sitting in a doleful posture for many nights together. This coffin was called by the country people *the trough of the maid of Meldon*, and water found in it was a specific in removing warts, and curing many inveterate complaints." Mackenzie says "it is used as a trough for cattle." "One of her most favourite forms was that of a beautiful woman. But she was Proteus-like, and appeared in a thousand forms, lights, and colours, flickering over the Wansbeck, or under a fine row of beech trees, in the lane between the bridge and Meldon Park. The people of Meldon, however, became so familiarised with her appearance as to say when she passed them, 'there goes Meg of Meldon.' Such were the fables with which the calumny of an ignorant and superstitious age aspersed the character and memory of a person who was probably much more enlightened and virtuous than her credulous contemporaries.

"Within the last century some large fortunes are attributed to the discovery of bags of her gold. That which was deposited in the well near Meldon Tower has never been found; but the ceiling of Meldon school-house once gave way with the weight of a bag of her money. This occurred while the master was out at dinner, and the varlets who were fortunate enough to be in, and devouring the contents of their satchels at the time, had a rare scramble for the coins." *

It is related by Mr. Robert White, on the testimony of a

* Hodgson's *Hist. of Northumberland*, part 2, vol. ii. pp. 11, 12.

correspondent, that an attempt was once made by an honest countryman to recover the mass of treasure which had been deposited in the well near Meldon Tower. "He was requested to repair to the place alone, on a particular night, exactly at twelve o'clock, and he would meet another person like himself who would assist him in raising the gold. He was further reminded that to be successful profound silence was necessary to be observed. Being a man not destitute of courage, he attended at the time and found the assistant, apparently a decent-looking personage, awaiting his arrival. Having brought with him a piece of chain and a set of grappling hooks, he attached them to a jack roll, which at that period would appear to have been fixed over the well for the purpose of drawing water. His comrade seemed to be perfectly acquainted with the nature of their business, for he rendered him all the assistance in his power, and when a loop was formed towards the middle of the chain the countryman thrust one leg therein, while the other allowed him to descend with all possible care. To his surprise he found the well nearly empty of water, and fastening his grapplers round the money succeeded once more in ascending to the top. Grasping the other handle of the jack he and his fellow exerted themselves so well that the treasure was speedily raised, and the former, seizing it firmly, gave it a swing towards him that he might land it safely on the bank. Unfortunately, however, when he was performing this last important part of his task, excitement had wound him to the highest pitch; the store of wealth was about to be placed at his feet, and the words, 'we have her now,' escaped from his lips. This operated like a dissolving spell on what was done, the hooks quitted their hold, the object of his anxiety eluded his grasp and descended again into the well, out of which it is never more to be raised by mortal power. Even the personage who had assisted the countryman seemed changed from the masculine to the femi-

nine gender, and appeared to be no other than Meg herself, who, strange to relate, had endeavoured to bestow on the poor man what, had his own folly not marred the design, would have made him 'a gentleman for life.'" *

I have also met with several kindred relations from an aged native of that part of the country. Some children, while playing in the ruinous "castle" or tower of Meldon, where tradition says she once resided, happening to turn over some of the stones, lighted upon a considerable sum of money, of which some got so much as their hats full; but there had been something not "cannie" about it, for although they made good enough use of it, "it went all away, and they never knew themselves any better for it;" a very prevalent opinion about evil-got money thus brought to light.

A stonemason once dreamt that a triangular box filled with gold was concealed underneath a large stone that lay in one of the fields near Meldon, but before making a trial to obtain it he had spoken of the circumstance to some one or other, and sure enough, some days afterwards when he went, the stone was overturned and a "three-neukit" hole appeared in the midst of where it had lain. Who had secured the treasure was never divulged.

In troublesome times, my informant went on in substance to say, it was customary to conceal valuables from the clutches of lawless freebooters, in the hope of recovering them when the rights of property became again respected. Of this kind, and not Meg's accursed pelf, is the treasure that, wrapped up in a bullock's hide, was sunk to the bottom of the deep, clear well of Meldon. It was never discovered except on one occasion. Not only had it been revealed to sight, but it had been got hold

* Richardson's *Local Historian's Table Book*, Legend. Div., i. pp. 138, 139.

of, and two oxen and two horses had been yoked to it and had hauled it to the brim, when one of those engaged spoiled all by challenging all the fiends of the nether world to do their best, "for we have her now." Scarcely had he made the impious boast when the bag burst asunder, and its ponderous contents went plunging down into the depths and were never seen more. But often still the youngster gazes wistfully down through the crystal waters, unfathomably deepened by the reflection of the blue ether overhead, for he is sure that the treasure is yet there, and may he not cherish the hope that he, as well as any other, may be the lucky one whom it is to raise to plenty and honour!

"The infernal machinations of Meg," says Mackenzie, "long continued the terror of the neighbouring villagers. Few of the last age were so foolhardy as to venture through Meldon woods, where it is reported she made her dreadful exit when the sun was below the horizon." Fated only to review at night the domains that it had once been her pride to own, she tarried as long as permitted in the beloved territory, for when the ploughmen went out in the grey dawn to catch their horses she would have been still discernible among the dissolving vapours, "riding in her coach and four upon the Meldon hills."

She was a true ghost, for, as Mr. Hodgson remarks, it was her particular pleasure to haunt Meldon Bridge. My informant, when a boy, never passed it late in the evening without bracing himself with a sort of defiant exorcism, saying to himself, "What do I fear on Doll [a riding mare] and wee Fanny [his canine attendant] beside me." Meg had not been listening, for he was never put in jeopardy of his life.

A woman and her daughter were once bringing letters from Morpeth to a Captain Middleton, who then dwelt in that quarter, and night came upon them as they reached a field which they had to cross in going for the bridge. There was a slight

"grimeing" of snow on the path at the time, and from a track of footprints they remarked that a woman had preceded them. When they arrived at the bridge, the mother thought she saw a white woman, some way off, leaning against one of the battlements, and "had it in her mind" to say to her daughter, who, not so observant, had perceived nothing, "there's the woman whose footmarks we saw;" but a feeling as if that was something "not right" made her hold her peace till she had passed the place where the object of alarm appeared to stand, but when she looked back the figure had vanished, and as for the footsteps, like Lucy Gray's, "further there were none." This is easily explicable.

> "Things viewed at distance through the mist of fear,
> By their distortion terrify and shock
> The abused sight."

But what shall we say of another of Meg's pranks? An individual, well known for his scepticism in regard to ghosts, had frequently heard of Meg's achievements in frightening people, but would not credit them. He, however, had no scruple in perpetuating the belief among the credulous, so one mirk night, dressed in white, he placed himself on the parapet wall of Meldon Bridge, and there sat awaiting passers-by. He had not stayed long till he found Meg herself seated alongside of him. "You've come to fley," * said she, "and I've come to fley, let's baith fley thegither." At the same time she drew herself a little nearer him, while he, jealous of a too familiar intimacy, moved still further along. Meg repeated her movement, and he still shrunk from her approach. She at length came so close as to give him a push, which he hastily attempted to shun, but lost

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* Frighten.

balance, and fell headlong into the water. Let us hope that Meg was rewarded with a respite for ducking the rival ghost.

Another adventure in which Meg was concerned was sent me in 1877 by a clergyman in that neighbourhood, in the handwriting of the narrator, a tradesman, I believe, in Whalton. I shall reproduce it pretty nearly in the language in which it was told. Two dwellers in the hamlet of Thornton who believed in Meg's appearance as a ghost, and a friend of theirs, a Scotchman, who could not be brought to credit it, sat one night after having been at the smithy, in a public-house at Meldon, disputing as to her existence or non-existence as a spiritual visitant. They then left in company for Thornton. At a certain part of the road one of the two believers, named Todd, gave some chains he was carrying from the smith's shop to his mate and fell behind. As soon as the other two were out of sight and hearing he took a short cut across a corner of a field and placed himself behind a hedge at the foot of a bank, a favourite haunt of Meg, and getting himself into the most ghostly style he could assume, he awaited their arrival. The Scotchman came up first, shouting, "Where are ye, Meg? Let's see you, Meg!" when Todd stepped out into view, saying, "Here's Meg, what want ye wi' Meg?" The other lad dropped the chains and made off, and the Scotchman after him. Todd, thinking he had overdone the thing, picked up the chains and ran after them to stop them, but the faster he ran the faster ran they, the tinkling of the chains behind keeping up their terror. The two lads had got upon Meldon Bridge over the Wansbeck, which was then a very narrow and steep structure. At the one end of it they disturbed a kyloe that had got out of a field. This started out as Todd was passing, and "gave a rout," and ran headlong across the bridge behind him. Todd, taking the beast for Meg, increased his speed, the most frightened of the three. Thus there were three men and a kyloe all terrified and running at

their utmost pith. The three men arrived home in a serious state of fear, from which they were long recovering. The narrator adds a remark of identification. "Todd was said to be the father or grandfather to Jack Todd, the wood wagoner. Both the public-houses in Meldon were closed before my day."

Stripping off the accessories of these stories, the machinery engages our attention; and from it we obtain intimations of the native soil of the fragments of ancient beliefs, thus specially localised. The seven years' wandering and alternate rest is akin to the cave that opens its portals once septennially, that its enchanted inmates may be enfranchised; or to Thomas of Ercildoune's and other waifs that have fallen to the good folks seven years' compulsory residence in Fairyland. The Pixies in Devonshire, for which we have Mrs. Bray's authority, punish those that offend them for the same sacred interval.

The spirit's appearance as a dog is also in accordance with standard sanction. When the evil one himself assumes the "shape o' beast," a black dog is a favourite form. Thus he appeared to Janet Watson, tried for a witch, 1661; and to cite a Border instance to Robert Grieve, *alias* Hob Grieve, the Lauder wizard (tried anno 1649), in a haugh on Galawater, near Stow, "like a great mastiff, bigger than any butcher's dog, and very black, running upon him." (*Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, p. 35.) The notion may come from the east, where the dog as an unclean animal is held in detestation. "The Turks report, as a certain truth," says Morgan's *History of Algiers*, "that the corpse of the Heyradin Barbarossa was found four or five times out of the ground, lying by his sepulchre, after he had been there inhumed; nor could they possibly make him lie quiet in his grave, till a Greek wizard counselled them to bury a black dog together with the body; which done, he lay still, and gave them no further trouble."

Wells, marshes, and pools of water actually appear to have

been resorted to as places for concealment of articles of importance in periods of alarm. In the day of calamity the ancient Briton consigned his bronze cooking utensils to the nearest "well-eye," or peat pit, rather than permit the invader to gain possession of them.

In Ireland, treasure crocks guarded by huge serpents lie at the bottom of the deepest lakes.* In Wimbell Pond, in Sussex, an iron chest of money is concealed,† and there is a Yorkshire legend to that effect. Some have been enriched by money found in wells. In Sharp's *History of Hartlepool* we read of one Nicholas Woodifield, farmer at Mainsforth, in Durham, who filled his brogues so well with gold pieces discovered at the bottom of a well, that he purchased the manor of Trimdon, in that county.

A box of sunken treasure, in Bromley Lake, Northumberland, was laid under a spell to be won, "by two twin yauds, two twin oxen, two twin lads, and a chain forged by *a smith of kind;*" ‡ a myth corresponding to the helpers at the well of Meldon. We find a similar agency and catastrophe repeated in a Yorkshire tale. A person having intimation of a large chest of gold being buried in an artificial mount, called Willy Howe, near Bridlington, "dug away the earth until it appeared in sight; he then had a train of horses, extending upwards of a quarter of a mile, attached to it by strong iron traces; by these means he was just on the point of accomplishing his purpose, when he exclaimed—

> 'Hop Perry, prow Mark,
> Whether God's will or not, we'll have this ark.'

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* *Irish Penny Journal*, p. 234.

† *Choice Notes and Queries*, Folklore, p. 113.

‡ R. White, in Richardson's *Local Hist. Table Book*, Leg. Div., iii. p. 106.

He, however, had no sooner pronounced this awful blasphemy, than all the traces broke, and the chest sunk still deeper in the hill, where it yet remains, all his future efforts to obtain it being in vain." * We have the legend with a slight change repeated in Cornwall. Nathan's Keeve is a large round basin, which a fall of water a hundred feet in height has formed out of the solid rock. According to tradition, "there was in it a silver bell, for which some men were fishing, when one who had brought it above water cried, 'Thank God, here it is;' but the other replying, 'No thanks to him, we have got it without him,' it immediately tumbled in again and there remained." †

For aught we know an animal's skin would be the most durable coffer that could be suggested to a rude people. That prankish spirit "Silky's" treasure was "sewed up in a great dog or calf-skin." In the ruins of a round tower in Southwick parish, near Borland, Kirkcudbrightshire, as the tradition goes, there lies somewhere in the foundation a bull hide full of gold, as much as would enrich all Scotland. "Katie Neevie's hoard," in the parish of Lesmahagow was secreted under a vast stone in the shape of "a kettle-full, a boot-full, and a bull-hide full" of gold.‡ In the scarcity of manufactured products at an early period of our history the hides of animals performed many important services of which at present we have little idea. The ancient Scot cooked his meat in a cauldron improvised of the skin of the animal that furnished the meal. I have been told of a hideful of tallow in good preservation dug out of a Highland peat moss. There are instances in which a hide was employed as a winding-sheet. The body of Hugh Lupus, the great Earl of Chester, who came over with the Conqueror, and who died

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* Hone's *Table Book*, i. col. 82.

† *Life and Labours of Dr. Adam Clarke*, p. 117.

‡ Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*.

before 1120, when discovered in 1723 was first wrapped in "leather," and then enclosed in a stone coffin.* John Forcer, prior of Durham, who died in 1374, was stitched up in an ox-hide at the price of nine shillings, including the tailor's wages; and the hide was found "tolerably fresh," but the body much decayed, in 1729, when the pavement of that part of Durham Cathedral where he had been laid was under repair.† Tradition in this respect appears to have retained the impress of primitive practices, of which there are no longer any recollections.

The Drake Stone, Harbottle.

Near the frowning and rugged crags of Harbottle, in Northumberland, which impart a high degree of sublimity to the adjoining scenery, is the famous "Drake Stone," near the Loughs, which rivals the Bowder Stone in Westmoreland. It is customary with the young men in the neighbourhood to climb up this huge rock, from the top of which there is a fine prospect of the vale below, but it requires considerable dexterity and address to descend.

The rustics here relate a story respecting the "Drake Stone" with great glee. On one fine summer evening, a few years ago, a stranger arrived at the village. He entered a public-house, and having taken some refreshment, immediately departed. His intention was to ascend the Drake Stone, which he did with little difficulty, and after remaining for some time on the summit of the rock, enjoying the beautiful and extensive prospect, the deepening gloom warned him that it was time to depart, and he therefore set about descending the dangerous rock, but in vain. He looked at the yawning depth below and shuddered at the

* Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain*, ii. p. 366.

† Raine's *Durham Cathedral*.

prospect of attempting to descend; further, the night was closing in, not a human being was in sight, and the poor traveller in an agony of fear was obliged to content himself with remaining on the cold rock with the starry heaven for a canopy. Wrapping himself up in his garments as well as he could, he laid him down to obtain, if possible, some repose. To sleep, however, was not in his power, the knowledge of his situation made him to lie awake anxiously awaiting the break of day. Early on the following morning the inhabitants on rising were surprised to hear a human voice, "loud as the huntsman's shout," bawling lustily for assistance. Seeing his danger, they immediately proceeded to the stone, and by proper means and some exertion he was safely extricated from his very perilous situation where he had passed so sleepless a night.

Harbottle is not only distinguished by one of the most perfect Saxon camps in the county, but it is also remarkable as being the birthplace of General Handyside, whose regiment is noticed by uncle Toby in *Tristram Shandy*.—*Alnwick Mercury*, Aug. 1, 1863.

Legends of Brinkburn.

The history of Brinkburn Priory, by Mr. F. R. Wilson, the architect, so far as it can be traced from an elaborate study of the remains of the buildings, and in incidental notices from old writers, forms one of those local monographs that of late years have added so much to the value of the Transactions of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club.

With the "Book" or Chartulary of Brinkburn still inaccessible to public research, Mr. Wilson does well to assume "that there are many chapters in the history of Brinkburn yet untold."

The contributions that we now present are written neither on sculptured stone nor in old dim writs hard to be deciphered,

but have been preserved by faithful tradition even until now, and what we have to do is to render them accurately as they have been delivered to us, so that the popular interest in the ruined monastery on the Coquet may also have its abiding record.

The Hunter and his Hounds.

Under a grassy swell, which a stranger may know by its being surrounded with a wooden railing, on the outside of the priory, tradition affirms there is a subterraneous passage, of which the entrance remains as yet a secret, leading to an apartment to which access is in like manner denied; and as these visionary dwellings are invariably provided with occupants, it is asserted that a hunter who had in some way offended one of the priors was, along with his hounds, by the aid of enchantment, condemned to perpetual slumber in that mysterious abode. Only once was an unenthralled mortal favoured with a sight of the place, and of those who are there entombed alive. A shepherd, with his dog attending him, was one day listlessly sauntering on this verdant mound, when he felt the ground stirring beneath him, and springing aside he discovered a flat door—where door had never before been seen by man—yea, that door opening upwards of its own accord on the very spot where he had been standing. Actuated by curiosity, he descended a number of steps which appeared beneath him, and on reaching the bottom found himself in a gloomy passage of great extent. Groping along this warily, he at last encountered a door which opening readily he, along with the dog, was suddenly admitted into an apartment illumined so brilliantly that the full light of day seemed to shine there. This abrupt transition from darkness to light for some minutes deprived him of the power of observing objects correctly, but gradually recovering he beheld enough to strike him with astonishment, for on one side, at a

table with his head resting on his hand, slept one in the garb of a hunter, while at some distance another figure reclined on the floor with his head lying back, and around him lay many a noble hound ready as ever, to all appearance, to renew that fatal chase which consigned them all to the chamber of enchantment. On the table lay a horn and a sword, which, seeing all was quiet, the shepherd stepped forward to examine, and taking up the horn first applied it to his lips to sound it. But the hunter, on whom he kept a watch, showed symptoms of awakening whenever he made the attempt, which alarming him he replaced it, and the figure started no longer. Reassured, he lifts the sword, half draws it, and now both men became restless and made some angry movements, and the hounds began to hustle about, while his own dog, as if agitated by the same uneasiness, slunk towards the door. Alive to the increased commotion and hearing a noise behind him, very like the creaking of hinges, he suddenly turned round and found to his dismay that the door was moving to. Without waiting a moment he rushed through the half-closed entrance, followed by his dog. He had not fled ten paces when, shaking the vault with a crash, the door shut behind him and a terrible voice assailed his ears, pouring maledictions on him for his temerity. The fugitive traversed the passage at full speed, and gladly hailed the light streaming in at the aperture above. The shepherd quickly ascended the steps, but before he got out the cover had nearly closed. He succeeded, and that was all, in escaping perhaps a worse fate than those victims of monkish thraldom whom he had just left; but his poor dog was not so fortunate, for it had just raised its fore parts to come up when the door fastened on it and nipped it through.

This story being a family inheritance of the European race of people has obtained a wide circulation, and there are many modes of telling it, answerable to the far-separated localities to which it it has been adapted. We recognise it in the banished

Saturn reposing in a cave on a remote desolate coast; * in the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; † in the seven foreign brethren, in Roman habits, lying in a profound slumber, in a cave on the shores of the ocean, in the extreme northern confines of Germany; ‡ in the three founders of the Helvetic confederacy, whom herdsmen call the three Tells, who sleep in their antique garb, till Switzerland's hour of need, in a cavern near the lake of Lucerne; § in Ogier the Dane or Holger Danske, enchanted in the vaults of the Castle of Cronenburgh; ‖ in Frederick Barbarossa miraculously preserved to unite the Eastern and Western Empires, in the Kylfhausen Berg in Thuringia, or, according to another legend, in the Untersberg, near Salsburg; ¶ but in the latter place the tradition vacillates betwixt him and the great Emperor Charles V.; ** and in the legend of the tomb of Rosencreutz, as told in the 379th number of the *Spectator*. Transferred to Britain, it has peopled the mountain and sea-side caves with enchanted warriors and huntsmen. Of King Arthur and Sewing-shields I have already written in the *Borderers' Table Book*. The story crops out in the tale of the "Wizard's Cave" at Tynemouth.†† The correct legend about Dunstanborough Castle tells that its

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* Plutarch.

† Gibbon.

‡ *Paulus Diaconus de Gestis Longobardum*, lib. i. c. 4. *Olaus Magnus Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus, Romæ*, 1555, lib. i. c. 3.

§ Mrs. Heman's *Works*, ii. p. 65. *Quarterly Review*, March, 1820.

‖ *Inglis's Journey through Norway, Sweden, and Denmark*, p. 290, 291. *Quarterly Review*, ubi sup.

¶ Menzel's *History of Germany*, i. p. 487. *Quarterly Review*, 1820.

** Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 234

†† Hone's *Table Book*, ii. p. 747-750.

chieftain was charmed with his hounds, his sword, and bugle-horn, and enclosed in one of the vaults of that ancient fortress ; * the adjuncts of Monk Lewis, Service, and others being imaginary. At Fast Castle the adventurer comes out a hoary-headed man, minus his coat-tails. In the Cheviots the cave contains "three men in armour" surrounded with their "hounds, hawks, and horses." † Sir Walter Scott in an early poem makes them an army assembled by the spells of Sir Michael Scott to aid Halbert Kerr.‡ Sometimes they are to return with Thomas of Ercildoune; and meanwhile remain entranced within the chambers of the Eildon Hills. § The vault at Roslin holds alive a warrior who may be approached every seven years; and the difficulty to free him here, as well as elsewhere, depends on the choice of the horn or the sword. Thomas the Rhymer, with a mighty host, lies asleep under Tom-na-hurich, a mountain near Inverness.

"Beside each coal-black courser sleeps a knight ;
A raven plume waves o'er each helmed crest,
And black the mail which binds each manly breast,
Girt with broad faulchion, and with bugle green.—
Say, who is he, with summons strong and high,
That bids the charmed sleep of ages fly ;—
While each dark warrior rouses at the blast,
His horn, his faulchion grasps with mighty hand,
And peals proud Arthur's march from Fairy-land !"

Leyden.

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* *Widdrington, a Tale of Hedgely Moor*, by James Hall, p. 84. Alnwick, 1827.

† Poems by Robert Davidson of Morebattle, p. 172.

‡ Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, i. p. 310, &c.

§ Scott's *Demonology*, p. 133; where a similar story is cited from Reginald Scott's *Discovery of Witchcraft*. Leyden's *Poetical Remains*, p. 357.

The Bells of Brinkburn.

Centuries ago, one of the priors of Brinkburn presented the bells of that building to the priory of Durham. They had been the pride of the secluded sanctuary on the Coquet, for their tones were possessed of great power combined with sweetness, and many tempting offers had Durham made to secure them, but hitherto to no purpose. But she prevailed at length, and the bells so coveted were removed from the tower and dispatched on horseback on their way to Durham, under the care of some monks. They journeyed till they reached the river Font, which owing to a quantity of rain having fallen was much swelled. However, they prepared to ford it; but when the horses reached the middle of the stream the bells by some means fell, or according to the popular belief were removed from the backs of the horses by miraculous interposition, and sank to the bottom. Owing either to the dangerous state of the stream, or from the bells being unwilling to be removed, the exertions of the monks to recover them proved unavailing; so they returned to Brinkburn and reported the disaster. But the Brinkburn prior determined not to be baffled, sent forthwith a messenger to Durham to request the presence of his brother prior, and both ecclesiastics then proceeded with a full attendance to liberate the imprisoned bells, and lo! the superior abilities of high church functionaries over humble monks were manifest to every one. For they had no sooner ridden into the stream, than the bells were lifted with ease; and being conveyed to Durham, were lodged there in safety. To this day it is a saying in Coquetdale that "Brinkburn bells are heard at Durham;" and Wallis, in his *History of Northumberland*, assures us that the bells of Brinkburn were removed to the cathedral on the banks of the Wear. Still there are doubters. Walter White in 1859, says "the deep pool

where the bells were lost is still to be seen in the river" [Coquet];* and Mr. Wilson is positive that some years ago, "a fragment of the bell was found buried at the root of a tree, on the hill on the opposite side of the river." †

I fear that several of the tales of "flitted" bells are popular myths. Thus tradition says that the bell of Coldingham Abbey was transported to Lincoln, and is still there. ‡ It was a popular opinion that the bells of Jedburgh Abbey were lost in the Tweed opposite Kelso, in an attempt made to ferry them across. Another tradition is "that they were carried off to Hexham, and fitted up to adorn the venerable cathedral there." § Of the bells of the abbey of Cambuskenneth in Clackmannanshire, it is reported that one was for some time in the town of Stirling, but that the finest was lost in its passage across the river Forth. ‖ The bell of Morvern Church had been transferred from Iona. ¶ There is a tradition that St. Maree used to preach at a place called Ashig, on the north-east coast of the Isle of Skye, "and that he hung a bell in a tree, where it remained for centuries. It was dumb all the week till sunrise on Sunday morning, when it rang of its own accord till sunset. It was subsequently removed to the old church of Strath, dedicated to another saint, where it ever afterwards remained dumb; and the tree on which it had so long hung after withered away." ** Bells were sometimes not satisfied

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* *Northumberland and the Border*, p. 187.

† *Berwickshire Naturalists' Club's Proceedings*, iv. p. 140.

‡ Fullarton's *Gazetteer of Scotland*, i. p. 290. Hunter's *Coldingham Priory*, p. 75.

§ Hilson's *Guide to Jedburgh*, p. 15.

‖ Fullarton's *Gazetteer*, i. p. 233.

¶ Dr. N. M'Leod in *Good Words*, 1863, p. 837.

** Dr. W. Reeves on St. Maelrubha, in *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. iii. p. 291.

with their new positions. They required to be tied, till they were reconciled to the change. Many of them, says Brand, "are said to have retained great affection for the churches to which they belonged, and where they were consecrated. When a bell was removed from its original and favourite situation, it was sometimes supposed to take a nightly trip to its old place of residence, unless exercised in the evening, and secured with a chain or rope.*

The tolling of the bell of Brinkburn Priory was once the occasion of the burning of the pile by a party of marauding Scots, who would not have discovered its situation, so densely it stood embosomed in woods, except for this imprudence.†

Mr. Wilson says the fairies lie buried at Brinkburn. This mortality, unheard of elsewhere, must have been attributable to the potency of the bells. Half a century ago the bell of the parish kirk of Hounam, in Roxburghshire, fell; in consequence of which the banished fairies reassembled from the ends of the earth, to resume their revelry on the green banks of the Kale. But the mischief that they perpetrated was insufferable, and as a remedy the bell was reinstated, when matters were restored *in statu quo ante.*‡ This is true to the general belief about these beings. "There is a hill near Botna, in Sweden, in which formerly dwelt a troll, a sort of Scandinavian fairy. When they got up bells in Botna Church, and he heard the ringing of them, he is related to have said:

> "Pleasant it were in Botnahill to dwell,
> Were it not for the sound of that plaguey bell."

"It is said that a farmer having found a troll sitting very disconsolate on a stone near Tiis lake, in the island of Zealand,

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* Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 136.

† Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., i. p. 223.

‡ Davidson's *Poems*, p. 100, &c. 222, 223.

and taking him at first for a decent Christian man, accosted him with 'Well! where are you going, friend?' 'Ah!' said he, in a melancholy tone, 'I am going off out the country. I cannot live here any longer, they keep such eternal ringing and dinging!'"*

Superstitions connected with Holed Stones.

In the western part of Cornwall there are several ancient monuments known by the name of "Holed Stones." They consist of thin slabs of granite, each being pierced by a round hole, generally near its centre. They vary in size and in form. . . . . The monument to which I would now more particularly call attention is at Tolven Cross. . . . . Formerly it was a conspicuous object by the wayside; but within the last twelve or fourteen years a house has been built betwixt it and the road. It now forms part of a garden hedge. In a field adjoining the opposite side of the road, perhaps eighteen yards from the stone, is a low irregular barrow, about twenty yards in diameter and studded with small mounds. Dr. Borlase has alluded to the superstitious practice of drawing children through the holed stone at Madron to cure them of weakness or pains in the back, a practice still observed at the holed stone at St. Constantine. I was told that some remarkable cures had been effected there only a few weeks since. The ceremony consists of passing the child nine times through the hole alternately from one side to the other, and it is essential to success that the operation should finish on that side where there is a little grassy mound, recently made, on which the patient must sleep with a sixpence under his head. A trough-like stone, called the "cradle," on the eastern side of the barrow, was formerly used for this purpose. This

* Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 112.

stone unfortunately has long been destroyed. That holed stones were not originally constructed for the observance of this peculiar custom is evident, for in some instances the holes are not more than five or six inches in diameter. A few years ago a person digging close to the Tolven discovered a pit in which were fragments of pottery, arranged in circular order, the whole being covered by a flat slab of stone. Imagining that he had disturbed some mysterious place, with commendable reverence he immediately filled up the pit again. Taking the proximity of the barrow in connection with the pit, it seems most probable that the Tolven is a sepulchral monument, stones of this kind being erected perhaps to a peculiar class of personages.—*Alnwick Mercury*, Oct. 1, 1869.

Warnings.

In treating of warnings believed to be sent to relatives before the death of their near connections, I speak of incidents that were communicated by parties who, as it is expressed, have long since "gaen to their place," it is hoped to a better one, for worthy, well-living people they were, although haunted with the infirmity of a superstitious foreboding. They are all from humble life. E. H., on the night on which her grandfather died, was engaged in darning stockings in the house of her half-sister, whose grandfather this was not, when she heard as if a person was moaning in the adjacent cottage. Her half-sister, who was in bed, on its being alluded to, said she had not heard any noise; and when she went out to inquire at the other house they were at rest in bed, and she could not obtain an answer. When she returned and resumed her work, she became once more conscious of the sounds of distant moaning. When morning arrived, there was nothing the matter with the people in the other house; but three days afterwards, when

the news came of her relative's decease, she found that the time corresponded with that during which she had been listening to those mysterious tokens of human agony, but her relative had passed away quietly without a murmur.

The same grandfather had also been forewarned, once in his lifetime, of some approaching calamity before the death of his first wife. On returning from selling some sheep, he saw before him the vision of a man, with a corn rope or band in his hand, as if he were preparing to tie up a sheaf, which vanished from before his eyes when he reached the spot where it appeared.

Her father and another man, when once thrashing with the flail in the barn, heard twice or thrice a singular noise, as if something was screwed down from the roof, and then fell on the floor. Her father, thinking it was fire, went to extinguish it with his foot. "Ah!" said the other man, who had apprehended its ominous character, "ye needna tramp it oot, it's a warning for you an' for me." And accordingly, shortly after that, the other man had one of his children, and her father his wife and two of his children, carried off by fever.

These are Berwickshire occurrences, but the same creed was prevalent about the same period in Northumberland. An old man who lived on Tyneside told me that three sharp taps had been applied to the window before his first wife died, but they were not taken into account till all was over.* He had an aunt who had got a token of the death of all her kindred except one, whose wraith she was vouchsafed to behold instead thereof. One day she was surprised to see this relative, who was a carrier, on a day customary for him to be elsewhere, approaching towards her across a lea, within view of the door of her

* For death-warnings by three distinct knocks on the bed's-head, see Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, pp. 121-2, London, 1721.

house, where she stood. She remarked to a neighbour, who was also looking out at her own door, what could have brought such a one there at that time of the week; but her neighbour, who may not have perceived anything, made no relevant reply. On that very day the carrier was drowned in crossing the Tyne, the water being stiff, and he seated on a pack-horse was hampered in directing its movements, and swept away. This same dame also felt so sure of her sagacious prescience, that she on one occasion foretold the death of one of her neighbours, a lass possibly consumptive, who sold milk. Having asked one of the place who had been purchasing her morning's supply of milk how she was, the answer was, "Well!" "Aye," says she, "she'll flit soon," and she died next day.

A joiner's wife in the country above Hexham got a "token" of her husband's death. It was on a Sunday, and he had gone to church, and she being left at home was on the outlook at the period when she expected his return. She saw him on his way back, as she thought, go past a dike-end, but he was so long in arriving afterwards that she wondered, and again went outside the house; and although the whole of the road was in view, she saw nothing of him. After a short suspense, however, her husband reached the house, but took to bed that afternoon and never left it.

A man in Wooler heard three raps before his father died. His father dropped down suddenly shortly afterwards at Wooler "High Fair."

These stories may be accounted trivial, but they show the incipient stages of still more extravagant beliefs, and some of them have no doubt been propagated traditionally. The narrators will sometimes express their unbelief by the qualifying statement that "we needna mind thae freits," or it's "just an auld freit."

Again, A. C. believed that she had a warning of the death of her daughter shortly before she departed. She and her husband were watching beside the sick bed, when, at four o'clock in the morning, she heard a rap on the bed-head. "Ah!" she exclaimed, addressing her husband, "my daughter's gone. Did you hear that?" He rose, and observed that the child was asleep; but in the afternoon of that day, at four o'clock, the hour foreshadowed, the child died.

Another woman had got warnings of the death of all her brothers except one, who still survived, far away from his native district, or much communication with her, being resident in the vicinity of London, while she dwelt in the northern part of Northumberland. Poor people who have no other earthly ties are much perplexed about the welfare of their relatives out of reach of being visited. In this instance, for about a week, his sister had most troublous dreams regarding her last brother, and told a friend of her apprehensions for his health. This was about three weeks before word reached her of his sudden illness, and a letter following announced his death.

Another individual dreamt of witnessing the marriage of a neighbour who was already a married man, but who was at present from home at a distance. While he was relating the circumstances of his dream to his wife, this man came home taken badly and died shortly after, for, said the narrator who told these stories and thoroughly believed them, "to dream of a marriage is a sign of death."

From the same party I derived a specimen of some warnings believed in among the colliery population near Newcastle. Near Heaton, a woman was returning one night from a visit to one of her gossips who was sick and lived about a mile away. As she passed the mouth of a certain pit near the road she saw, as it were, a white female rise up, who in a short time grew in size and assumed the shape of a white galloway of fiery temper, which

struck the coals about the pit mouth with its heels, as if pawing in eagerness to cleave the clouds, causing the particles to fly so as even to reach her, and while she was concerned about the annoyance this occasioned her it had vanished. Although she never had had any experience of such apparitions, she augured disaster from it, either to her friend or the pit. One to whom she told it was sceptical and declared he would go next night to the pit at one o'clock and see if there was any truth in the vision, and wonderful to tell he beheld the same wild thing she had done, and was so overcome that he *swarfed* for fear. It was seen by another party a third time, and the next day after four men were killed in the pit.

In a letter from Mr. Denham, dated October 27th, 1852, he gave me a good example of a *wraith*, from Westmoreland, which may be appropriately told here. "I have heard a curious relation of two men, father and son (the latter of whom I knew for forty years, and he only died this year), seeing the ghost of a naked woman in crossing a lonesome moor in Westmoreland by night. What is singular, the one said to the other, it is so and so, naming the female whom both knew. On getting to their home, some two or three miles distant, the first news which met their ear was the death of the individual above alluded to in childbirth, nearly an hour previous. This relation has ever occurred to me as the most simple and singular *ghost story* that ever I met with. The name of the father was Isaac Nelson, of the son, John. They were natives of Westmoreland, and respectable yeomen."

The following is from *Bee's Diary*, January 17th, 1684-5: "Departed this life John Borrow (of Durham), and 'twas reported y^{t} he see a coach drawn by 6 swine, all black, and a black man satt upon cotch box; he fell sick upon't and dyed, and of his death severall apparations appeared after."

A dog at one place gave three tremendous *yowls*, in the dead of night, before a person died. It came to the door for the purpose and had to be driven away.

In the vicinity of Kendal, in Westmoreland, a cock-crowing at night is often considered as ominous of something evil to the family. "A few years ago," says Mr. Pearson in a paper on the *Superstitions of Westmoreland*, "I had a servant, an elderly man, who was much disturbed because the cock took it into his head to crow in the night-time, frequently before we went to bed. Whenever this was the case, it was perceived that it threw him into no small perturbation. He was afraid that either death or some great calamity would occur to some of us. And what was indeed curious, a female to whom he was much attached did indeed die soon afterwards, so that there is no doubt he is more than ever confirmed in the belief that a cock-crowing in the night is ominous of death or some great misfortune"*

In Fifeshire, I was told by an acquaintance, an old cock—for had it been a young one it would have been the less thought of—crew about eight o'clock at night. A person was sent out, who caught and brought it into the house, and "threw its neck about." This was a death-omen to the family, unless the spell had been reversed by killing the cock.

Dr. Beattie, the poet and philosopher, evinced "a singular but deep-rooted aversion all his life for the crowing of a cock;"† perhaps it arose from this popular superstition about cock-crowing.

In Westmoreland, "a dog howling three times, a cock crowing the same number before midnight, putting a stocking on wrong side out—these are all considered very ominous things, and bring a gloom on a weak mind which will last a whole week."‡

In North Northumberland it is said that "the coroner never

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* *London Saturday Journal*, March 31, 1841, vol. i. p. 131.

† Sir W. Forbes's *Life of Beattie*, ii. p. 243.

‡ *London Saturday Journal*, vol. i. p. 134.

comes once but he comes twice," *i.e.* if one fatal death occurs, two will be sure to follow. Also, if one breaks a dish, it is said "there are other two to break yet," *i.e.* to be broken. In the parish of Llanymynech, in Montgomeryshire, "there is a saying much credited that 'if one dies there will be three, if four die there will be six.' This signifies, that whenever a funeral takes place there are generally two more within a short time, and should there happen to be four there will be two more."* If one has anything stolen from them it is a token of evil to follow, was believed in at Newcastle. In Montgomeryshire "the loss of articles of common use, or even the dropping of them accidentally, is thought to be a token." †

If one dream that a tooth is out it is a sign of a relative's death.

An old man had got warnings at the death of all his children who had died, but one was still left to him. One day a drop of blood gathered at his nose, which he observing, exclaimed sorrowfully, "Ah! my son's dead." It was too true, for a letter arrived next day which confirmed the omen.

There is a good description of a Warning, agreeable to the popular belief, in the Border novel of *Matthew Paxton*, the scene of which is laid in Northumberland, close to the Tillside.

"Before the story had lost its first freshness in my mind, an aunt of mine, far away in Liddesdale, was very ill, though I knew it not, sick unto death, and my mother was away west to see her, when one night I was riding by myself alone along a very lonely road far away from any house, on my way home from a day's visiting, at a part of the road where nobody could be hiding to fright me, I heard my name called three times,

* John Fewtrell in *Montgomeryshire Collections by Powys-Land Club*, vol. xiii. p. 125 (1880).

† *Ibid.*, p. 126.

Matthew, Matthew, Matthew, in a voice I could not clearly mind, but so like my mother's or my aunt's that I thought it was one of them. I did not think much of it at the time, but a few days after I got a letter from Liddesdale, with a black seal, and saw that my aunt had died at that very hour that I had heard the voice, so I could not help connecting these things in my own mind and thinking it was a warning from the departing spirit to me." *

Physical Endowments or Imperfections.

It is a belief not only in the north of England but also on the Continent, that the seventh son of a family, born without any girl intervening, is endued with sovereign virtue—the power once attributed to crowned heads—of healing diseases by the touch, and that he is destined to be a skilful and eminent physician.† As an attestation of his capabilities, a representation of "the seven starns" is believed to be impressed on his side or his breast. A medical practitioner, near Newcastle, to flatter one of his customers, told a mother that she should make her newly-born seventh son a doctor. "'Deed," she says, "I havena' the means to make him a doctor, but if ye'll take him yersell, and make him one, you're welcome to hae him, as I've dealt sae lang wi' ye." If a seventh daughter appeared in uninterrupted succession, she was to be a witch.

On October 17, 1663, one William Moulthrope, a Pontefract labourer, was called in question for speaking seditious words of Charles II. Among other expressions which he used were these: "What is the king better than another man? for Robin Bulman (meaninge one Robin Bulman, of Pontefract,

* *Matthew Paxton*, 3 vols, London, 1854, vol. ii. pp. 181-2.

† See also Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 129.

laborer), a seaventh sonne, can cure seaven evils, and the kinge can but cure nine, soe that the kinge is but two degrees better than Robert Bulman."* A prescription in the *Physician of Myddvai*, p. 456, for the cure of warts is: "Wash the warts with the water from a font in which the seventh son of the same man and wife is baptised."

A popular but strange remedy for sleep-walking, is the peculiar attribute of individuals born with their feet first. A benevolent and even sensible old lady, thus privileged "in life's morning march," once rose from what proved a mortal illness to cure her grandchild who was afflicted with this unreasonable restlessness. This she did by stamping nine times with her naked feet on his breast.

In Northumberland there are what are called "evil-eyed" and "bad-handed" people. Those who have the misfortune to labour under the latter imperfection, if they set a cletch of chickens, or even handle the eggs, they will miscarry. Mrs. Fenwick, a farmer's wife, has been notified to me as having a "bad hand," and the servants had to set the cletch of chickens.

Egg-setting, I am told, is not such a simple process as one would think, but has to be gone about after a form, and has annexed to it certain well-established conclusions. I will here place a few of its saws and observances, which are from Berwickshire.

It takes thirteen eggs to a cleckin, odd numbers being lucky.

"Wet-fited" (meaning web-footed) "beasts sit a month, and hens three weeks."

If eggs are set before the sun go down they come out cocks; if later in the evening hens are hatched.

If eggs are attempted to be set on a Sunday the chickens will "not come out."

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* *Depositions from York Castle*, p. 101.

Housewives don't set eggs in May, although it is confessed that when set in that month they produce the strongest birds.

The Sign of Life.

Professor Lebour, of the University of Durham College of Science, Newcastle, furnishes me with a somewhat singular superstition, which I have not seen noted elsewhere, called "The Sign of Life." "The expression is one," he writes, "I have only met with in the neighbourhood of Falstone, up North Tyne, where a peculiar tremulous involuntary twitching of the eye is said to be the 'Sign of Life,' and if repeated a certain number of times (three times, I think) in a month or a year (I forget which) is supposed to portend great things, but what things—whether good or bad—I cannot remember. My chief informant with regard to this mysterious 'Sign of Life,' was Mrs. Robson, the postmistress of Falstone, a very mine of local knowledge. My wife informs me that in the south of England (Hampshire and Wiltshire) the same thing is called 'Living Blood.'"

Virtues of Irish People.

A cow in the Wooler district having been stung by an adder, an Irish woman, who laughed all the while at the people's application to her, was brought to stroke or rub the swelling occasioned by the poison. She was also called on to rub the throat, when "the pap o' the hass came down." It is also believed that if Irish people spit all round a toad the animal will die. On this subject, *see* Mr. Henderson's *Folklore*, p. 166.

The Evil One.

A great fear of the presence of the Evil One evoked inadvertently pervaded the popular mind. One of the propitia-

tory names given to the malign being was "Owd Harry." "As cunning as Owd Harry" is a popular phrase. An old wife had a grown-up son called Harry, whose Christian name she had a maternal pride in unnecessarily repeating. On one occasion she was heard saying to him, "Harry, Harry, my son Harry, I daurena ca' ye Harry at neet, for fear the deil should come."

After death, and before the deposit of the inanimate body in the tomb, watch was placed over it, lest the archfiend should claim it—if deceased was one of his disciples—as a perquisite that had fairly lapsed. Long ago in a country place in Berwickshire some neighbours were watching beside the corpse of one who had been a very wicked man. One of the company, happening to go out to the door, beheld a large misshapen animal coming up a field towards the house, not quite straightforward, but questing backwards and forwards, as if in search for prey. He called out the rest of the company to see the ill-looking thing, but they speedily drew back and shut the door. Not long after the door opened, and a big dark man entered. All betook themselves to prayer. Some raved nonsense, others did not know what to do in their perplexity. The man approached the bed; but prayer being maintained he went away, "not being commissioned further," as my informant suggested. This is a piece of simple peasant lore without exaggeration.

"The alarm often experienced by country people on their seeing a balloon descending on their fields is well known. A singular instance is said to have occurred on the Scottish border. A shepherd who tended his 'peaceful people,' saw, with consternation, the aerial phenomenon immediately overhead and fled precipitately. The voyager shouted, and threw down a crown-piece in hope of tempting him to render assistance. The shepherd, seeing the shining bribe and hearing the voice, guessed with whom he had to deal, and turning his head towards the

supposed arch-fiend, cried out: 'Na, na, Satan! Saunce defies thee!'" (T. H. Bell, Alnwick, in *Newcastle Mag.*, ii. (1823), p. 351.)

In the case of the will of Thomas Hopper, of Medomsley, son of Humphrey Hopper, who died insane 1575-6, the father acts as if he considered his disease as being diabolical possession and practices exorcism. "The said Umphray conjeured the devyll when his sone was madd and raved."* The son "kend not his owne father when the said Umphra went to the doore, and came in againe and asked the said Thomas, 'Whoe am I? Am I not thy father?' And he, the said Thomas, wold say, 'Thou art the blak devell of Edeedsbrig.' And then the sayd Umphray saynd the said Thomas and corssed (crossed) hym, and spyttyd, and said, 'Away, devell,' many times."† During one violent paroxysm the attendant could not control the patient, and was obliged to waken the father to assist. "Then this examinate cauld of the said Umphray out of his bedd, which, seinge hys sone, the said Thomas, in that radg, maid a compas about his said sone Thomas bedd, and spytted and said, 'Fye, away, thou fowell theife, that comes to tempt us,' sainge to his son Thomas many times, 'Thou or I have offended God.'"‡

There was one Cuddy (Cuthbert, a common name in St. Cuthbert's territory) Blacket, who lived at Howburn or Holborn, in Lowick parish, in the era of Buonaparte's wars, and being a volunteer he had occasion to come and go to Belford to undergo military training. One night he got fuddled, and in returning home was passing over a stone laid for a bridge across a ditch or burn in the Bogle House Plant-

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* *Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings at Durham*, p. 271.

† *Ibid.*, p 272.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

ing. He might have been lost on the broad heathery moor that surrounds it, but at this juncture he foregathered with a gentleman dressed in black who conducted him to Howburn. He was the civilest gentleman he ever encountered, but before he had gained an undue influence over him he chanced to glance at his feet, and behold! they were cloven. The Bogle-houses —houses in Lowick Forest, consisting of a few humble cottages inhabited by pitmen—was an uncanny place, notable for *ferlies* being seen about it and unearthly noises being heard, which may have been only the wailings of the wind exaggerated by the fears of the lonely dwellers.

Divinations.

Sowing hempseed is part of the Halloween ritual as preserved by Robert Burns. In Northumberland its practice does not appear to have been confined to the epoch of that festival. The direction is: Go in at one door of the barn and out at another, and while sowing the hempseed say:

> "Hemp seed I sow thee
> And she (or he) that is to be my true love,
> Come after me and mow thee."

On looking over the left shoulder the form of his or her lover will be seen cutting down the visionary crop. To deter one making the experiment, it is told that a too curious girl, having gone through the operation, was shocked on looking behind to see a coffin. This was practised in Dorsetshire on Midsummer eve. (W. Barnes, in Hone's *Year Book*, 1175.)

Another form of prying into the future was to go to the churchyard and look through the keyhole; but unfortunately my informant had forgotten the remainder.

Put your shoes with the soles turned upwards beneath your pillow as you turn in to sleep and repeat,

> "I hope this night that I may see,
> The woman that's my bride to be;
> Not clothed in her rich array,
> But in clothes that she wears every day,"

and you will be favoured in a dream with a sight of her who is destined to be your wife. The person who told me this had gone through the performance successfully. One day after the trial, when riding out, he passed a girl and said to himself this is she of whom I dreamt. He had a firm conviction that, although a stranger, he had seen her before. They became acquainted, and subsequently were married.

In Dorsetshire if a girl, "at going to bed, put her shoes at right angles with each other, in the shape of a T, and say,

> "Hoping this night my true love to see,
> I place my shoes in the form of a T"

she will be sure to see her husband in a dream, and perhaps in reality by her bedside." (W. Barnes, *ubi sup.*)

"Whenever I go to lye in a strange bed I always tye my garter 9 times round the bed post, and knit nine knots in it, and say to myself:

> 'This knot I knit, this knot I tye,
> To see my love as he goes by;
> In his apparel'd array,
> As he walks in every day.'"
>
> *Connoisseur*, No. 56.

"You must be in another county, and knit the left garter about the right-legged stocking (let the other garter and stock-

ing alone), and as you rehearse these following verses, at every comma knit a knot :

> 'This knot I knit,
> To know the thing, I know not yet,
> That I may see,
> The man (woman) that shall my husband (wife) be,
> How he goes and what he wears,
> And what he does all days, and years.'

"Accordingly in your dream you will see him; if a musician, with a lute or other instrument; if a scholar, with a book or paper." (Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 137.)

"A gentlewoman that I knew confessed in my hearing that she used this method, and dreamt of her husband, whom she had never seen. About two or three years after, as she was on Sunday at church (at Our Lady's Church in Sarum), up pops a young Oxonian in the pulpit. She cries out presently to her sister, 'This is the very face of the man I saw in my dream.' Sir William Soames's lady did the like." *

"Lovers in an open passage at night sought to see through the meshes of a riddle the form of their future partners in connubial life."†

This custom is said to have been common in Northumberland without any form of words, it being sufficient to secure a dream of one's lover, when in a strange bed, to tie the garter round the bedpost.

If one eats a red herring raw to supper, and goes to bed backward, not saying a word, he will dream of his future wife before the morning.

On the appearance of the first moon after the new year, look

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* Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, pp. 137-8.

† Hodgson's *Hist. of Northumberland*, part 2, vol. ii. p. 329.

through a black silk handkerchief unwashed at it, and you will see by the number of moons visible the number of years that will elapse before you are married. In the *Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine*, No. 60 (1825), we have a query: "Observe the new moon through a silk napkin, and the number of moons visible will denote her age in days. This holds good till she is five or six days old. What is the cause of this phenomenon?" There are few young people in the country who have not tried this experiment.

Another way with the moon is to charm it thus: "At the first appearance of the new moon after New Year's Day (some say any other new moon is as good), go out in the evening and stand over the spars of a gate or stile looking on the moon, and say:

'All hail to the moon, all hail to thee,
I prithee good moon reveal to me
This night, who my husband (wife) must be.'

"In Yorkshire they kneel on a ground-fast stone. You must presently after go to bed. I knew two gentlewomen that did thus when they were young maids, and they had dreams of those that married them." *

At Wooler servant girls tie their left-leg stocking round their neck in order to dream of him whom they were to get for a husband. The first cut of "baby's cheese" is used to dream upon with similar intent; so also is a portion of the plateful of cake thrown over the bride's head immediately before she enters her future home, as well as a narrow piece of the bride's cake passed nine times through the wedding ring, this being

* Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 138; quoted, but not exactly, in Mr. Henderson's *Folklore*, p. 115; the omitted particulars are worth knowing, and therefore I repeat it. It is said to be customary in the Highlands of Scotland (Napier's *Folklore*, p. 98).

done of purpose for "dreaming pieces." Sops are made in beer, and a ring introduced, and then they are supped, and the first to whom the ring falls is to be first wed.

6. Although both Mr. Denham and Mr. Henderson have treated of the "Even-ash" leaf, they have not the exact Northumbrian formula. The leaf of the ash which has an equal number of divisions on each side, which is very difficult to obtain, is pulled with the following rhyme:

"Even, even, ash,
I pull thee off the tree,
The first young man that I do meet.
My lover he shall be."

It is then placed in the *left* shoe. It is also said, "Even-ash, under the shoe, will get you a sweetheart."

The same friend, now deceased, who supplied me with the above from Long Benton, communicated, in 1845, the following varieties of divining in a small way.

"*Scalding pease* is common. My mother has seen a *bean* placed in a *swad*, the receiver, whether male or female, is to be first married. On Carling Sunday, in some parts of Northumberland, *fried pease* are served up on a dish. Every one of the company is furnished with a spoon; they help themselves in regular succession, until the quantity is too small to allow of that mode of division. They then dole out one at a time, and whoever gets the last will be first married.

"Saint Agnes's Fast.—My father knew a woman who tried this charm, but contrary to the usual number of *one*, saw actually *three*, the last of whom had a wooden leg. This woman had the second man whom she saw in her dream, when she told my father of the circumstance; adding that she thought it very improbable that she would get the third, as he (a neighbour) had then a wife alive, and she had a dislike to his wooden leg; but who can

control the fates! this man's wife dying, and her husband also, she so far conquered her aversion to his timber toe as to become his for better for worse."

On the eve of St. Agnes's day (January 21), says Brand,* "many kinds of divination are practised by virgins to discover their future husbands. This is called fasting St. Agnes's Fast."

> "Supperless to bed they must retire,
> Nor look behind nor sideways; but require
> Of heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire."†

"In Scotland, a number of young men and women met together on St. Agnes's eve at midnight, went, one by one, to a certain field and threw in some grain, after which they repeated the following rhyme:—

> 'Agnes sweet, and Agnes fair,
> Hither, hither, now repair;
> Bonny Agnes, let me see
> The lad who is to marry me.'"

The shadow of the destined bride or bridegroom was supposed to be seen in a looking-glass on this very night."‡ "On St. Agnes night, 21 day of January," says Aubrey, "take a row of pins and pull out every one, one after another, saying a *pater noster* (or *Our Father*), sticking a pin in your sleeve, and you will dream of him or her you shall marry."§

Near Kendal "there were ceremonies in use not long ago of rather an awful nature, which for those who had the courage to use them were said to yield the desired information.

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* *Pop. Antiq.*, i. p. 21.

† Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*, st. vi.

‡ *English Folklore*, by the Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer, p. 184.

§ Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 136. London, 1721.

One was to walk backwards round a church three times on a certain night in the year, and then sit down in the porch, when the ghosts of their intended husbands or wives would pass before them; but if they were unfortunately not destined to enjoy that happy state, then they would see the apparition of their coffins. I recollect when a boy hearing an old man aver that he had gone through this trying ordeal; and that the apparitions of his two wives passed before him in the order he afterwards married them."* Something similar to this was practised in Yorkshire on St. Mark's eve, but it required three years' continuous vigils—See Brand's *Pop. Antiq.*, i. p. 115—also on Midsummer eve, when all that were to die that year in the parish passed by in procession into the church. (*Ibid.*, p. 170.)

To this class of beliefs belongs the superstition about the "She-Holly," which I first related in the *Local Historians' Table Book*, iii. pp. 254, 255; but as that work is out of print and becoming scarce, I may now transfer it here.

In Northumberland holly is divided into two kinds, *he* and *she*. *He* has prickles, but of *she*, being the upper leaves of the tress,

"Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear."

The leaves of the she-holly possess the wondrous virtue, if gathered in a proper manner, of exciting dreams concerning that momentous topic—a future husband or wife. To ensure this the leaves must be plucked upon a Friday evening, about midnight, by parties who, from their setting out until next day at dawn, must preserve unbroken silence. They are to be collected in a three-cornered handkerchief, and after being brought

* Mr. Pearson on Superstitions of Westmoreland, &c., in *London Saturday Journal*, i p. 131 (1841).

home, nine of the leaves must be selected and tied with nine knots inside the handkerchief, and then placed underneath the pillow. A dream worthy of all credit will be the issue.

My informant was once the leader of a party in an expedition that promised, by means of these potent holly leaves, to unlock the secrets of futurity. It consisted of himself, at that time a farm labourer, of his master's sister, and the female servant. When decent folks had gone to bed these three madcaps set out in profound silence for the tree, which stood at a farm homestead at a considerable distance, and having got there they provided themselves with the requisite supply. On their way back it added much to the frolic that each endeavoured to induce his or her fellows to break, in a heedless moment, the silence essential to the rite. This, though productive of much mirth, elicited no profane vocable. As the head of the party lived at a separate farmhouse, it was previously agreed that if on going home he should be refused admittance he was to return, and his two companions would provide him with a bed beside the master. The difference between master and servant at that period was not so wide as to make this to be reckoned an impropriety. He went home and knocked, but as he would not answer the questions put to him he was forced to return to his master's house, into which he was admitted by his expectant partners. At the time he entered his master's bedroom, which was upstairs, the master happened to be asleep; and he having undressed as quietly as possible and prepared his holly, crept in behind him. This, however, roused the slumbering farmer, who was surprised to find his bed invaded in this unceremonious way. "Wha's thou?" he shouts out. No reply. "Is thee, Geordy?" (his first-born, who lived at an off-farm). Deep silence. "Is thee, Tommy?" (another of his sons). No answer. "Is't thee, Michael?" (the real person). Michael heard him well enough, but pre-

tended to snore in sleep. The farmer in some perplexity was about to don his garments and descend to the kitchen to inquire after his singular bedfellow. It was well he did not, as the parties below would have equally tantalised him with dumb show. As it was, they were both stationed at the bedroom door, ill-able to restrain their pent-up mirth. The farmer at length, supposing the intruder to be actually asleep, and that he could be none other than he had surmised, judged it most advisable to follow his example. When morning arrived the whole thing was explained, and the farmer enjoyed a hearty laugh at his own share in the pantomime. The result of the matter was that Michael had a dream, in which he saw two damsels, of whom, the thoughts of the evening being uppermost, the master's sister was one, but neither of them was she—or rather they, for he was twice married—whom he afterwards led before the priest.

In the island of Bute there is a "dreaming tree" of a different species. This is a very lofty pine which grows in the centre of an enclosure called the "Devil's Caldron," near St. Blane's Chapel, at Kilcatan Bay. This "dreaming tree" to a great height "is divested of its foliage by those who wished to test its supposed qualities by breaking off small pieces to put under their pillows."*

The game of "keppy ball," as played at Alnwick, at the "coban tree," is another example of rural divination, although confined to children. I shall again avail myself of an article of my own, contributed to a local journal, "On Covin, Coban, or Capon Trees." Dr. Jamieson, in his *Scottish Dictionary*, says that in Roxburghshire the *covin-tree* signifies "a large tree in front of an old Scottish mansion-house, where the laird always met his visitors." A corruption of it is supposed to be "coglan-

* Wilson's *Guide to Rothesay*, p. 131.

tree." He derives it from the French *convent*, convention or agreement; which again is from the Latin *conventum*, a covenant, or *conventus*, an assembly. *Covent*, Anglo-Norman, is a covenant or agreement in "Morte Arthure." The witches of Auldearn met in covines, and the prettiest of them was called the maiden of the covine. The covin-tree is thus a variety of the trysting-tree, whose name and functions as the place of summons in the old "Riding" era, as the spot where rural lovers met and plighted troth, or where the exchanges of services and commodities held and still hold their convention, are indelibly impressed upon northern language and literature. Sir Walter Scott, in a note to his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, p. 277, holds the same view as Dr. Jamieson. "The tree near the front of an ancient castle was called the *covine-tree* probably because the lord received his company there."

"He is lord of the hunting-horn,
And king of the covine tree;
He's well lov'd in the western waters,
But best of his own Minnie."

When on a visit to Alnwick in 1861 I found it to be well understood that a tree, called there a coban or covan tree, once stood before every old castle (within a bowshot of Alnwick Castle for instance), and it was there the lord met his guests. And there used to be, and still is, a rhyme having reference to it, sung by young girls while playing at "keppy ball," or catch-ball, against a tree. From the time they can keep up the ball, they also divine their future prospects as to matrimony or spinster life.

"Keppy ball, keppy ball, covine tree,
Come down the lang loanin' and tell to me,
The form and the features, the speech and degree,
Of the man that is my true lover to be.

"Keppy ball, keppy ball, coban tree,
Come down the lang loanin' and tell to me,
How many years old (her name) is to be—

"*One* a maiden, *two* a wife,
Three a maiden, *four* a wife,
Five a maiden, *six* a wife," &c.

And so on, the odds for the single, the even numbers for the married state so long as the ball can be kept rebounding against the tree round which they play.

The Scottish covin and Northumbrian coban trees being thus identical, it is shown that capon trees such as that at Brompton, in Cumberland, and the capon tree on the Prior's haugh at Jedburgh, are of the class, the letters *v*, *b*, and *p* being mutually interchangeable in European languages. Mr. Tate, to whom I owe the rhyme, in return adopted my theory. See *History of Alnwick*, i. p. 436.

Turning the Riddle.

A much less excusable form of divinations is that called "Turning the Riddle." The following is a lively instance: One Moll Ha' (Mary Hall) in Wooler, overintimate with Satan, was accustomed to resort to this malpractice, at the instance of applicants, whenever anything was lost or stolen. She turned it and named the thief, and thus "gliffed" (or frightened) them to make restitution. One Jenny Sim, having had purloined some caps and shifts from a washing laid out to dry, had recourse to her, after other means of recovery failed. "The old folks of Wooler mind it well; what a day that was; all the houses shook as if stirred by an invisible wind," for she had actually bought up the prince of the power of the air.*

* To this we find a parallel in the evidence, April 1, 1670, of

That this was a very prevalent practice appears from the Depositions before the Courts at Durham and those kept at York Castle, published in two of the volumes of the Surtees Society, Nos. 21 and 40. 26th January, 1566-7, Margareta Lambert against Elizabeth Lawson. "John Lawson, husband of Elizabeth, informs that the said Margaret is an exorcist, 'that for certaine things lackinge she turned a seve upon a pair of sheres.'"* She was also a reputed "charmer." Between 1561 and 1577, one Allice Swan, wife of Robert Swan, made a confession after the minister in St. Nicholas Church at Newcastle, upon Sunday after the Sermon, for turning the riddle and sheares. To this iniquitous act she had been recently incited by the means and procurement of Margaret Lawson, Anne Hedworth, Elizabeth Kindleside, Agnes Rikerbye, Anne Bewike, and Jerrerd Robison. And "not having the feare of God" before her eyes, "but following the persuasion of the devell," she had "of a filthie lucre and under colour of a singular and secret knowledge of lost things, used by the space of certen yeres to cast or tourne the riddle and sheares, a kind of divination or charming expressedly forbidden by Gode's lawes and the Quene's Majestie."† In 1573, Thomas Hardye, of Morpeth, shoemaker, had as a hired man one John Bell, who was "sus-

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Margaret, wife of Richard Wilson, who "sayth, that in her former husband John Akers' life-time, she once lost out of her purse 50s. all but three halfe-pence; and, shortly after, there hapned to be a great wind, and after the wind was downe she mett with Anne Wilkinson, who fell into a great rage, bitterly cursing her, and telling her that she had bene att a wise man, and had raisd this wind which had put out her eyes, and that she was stout now she had gott her money againe."—*Depositions from York Castle*, p. 177.

* *Depositions at Durham*, p. 84.

† *Ibid.*, p. 117.

pect of michery (knavery) and untreweth concerning a shirt of one Thomas Somer," his fellow-workman, now servant to Robert Turner of Felton. While residing at Morpeth "bytwixt Christenmas and Easter," Somer had "his shirt goon [taken away], and maid moch to do for yt; and the said Bell moved this examinate to make no wonder for yt, and said for a grote of this deponent's pursse he shuld cause the said shirt to come againe, saing that he, the said Bell, reported that ther was a wyff in Newcastell, his cosinge, that culd torne the ryddle, etc.; and within thre days next after this examinate found his said shirt that was a laking. And then the said Bell demandyd 4d. of this examinate, and this deponent wold not agree to gyve the said Bell any thing unless he wold tell hym who had his said shirt he lacked." The consequence was that the Aldermen of Morpeth, and the representatives of the shoemaker trade, discharged Bell from working in that town till "he had brought them a certificat frome the said wyffe of Newcastell, that she could tell of things that weir stolne; but this he failed to do, and therefore he was accounted "to be no honest man." Bell required of Somer "6 names of everge syd of his neighbours," along with the 4d., to give to this "wyf of Newcastell that wold turne the redell, and get him the shirt within a weack."*

At Newcastle, February 15, 1659-60, Elizabeth, wife of George Simpson of Tynemouth, fisher, was accused for practising witchcraft, and besides she was reported to be a charmer, "and turnes the sive for money."† On December 13, 1598, the wife of Thomas Grace, of the parish of Stannington, Northumberland, was presented "for turninge of the ridle for things loste and stolne." The Rev. John Hodgson in noticing this case says a pair of spring shears were commonly used with the

* *Depositions at Durham*, pp. 251, 252.

† *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 82.

riddle, "and of their own accord turned round when the name of the person who had stolen the goods pursued was called over them."*

"Dec. 10, 1667. Cumberland. Before Thos. Denton, 219. Mary, wife of Stephen Johnson, of Carleton, saith, that, as shee was coming from Clifton, shee met with Jo. Scott, whoe told her that his wife had cast the riddle and sheares for some cloathes of George Carre's that was stole; and one Jo. Webster of Clifton, told them that they knew as much as he could tell them, and that it was a little bleare-eyed lasse that gott them, whoe lived neare them." The Rev. James Raine, who quotes this example, informs us that the formula used by the operator was as follows:

"By St. Peter and by St. Paul
If —— —— has stolen ——'s ——
Turn about riddle and shears and all."†

Dec. 12, 1596, the wife of Thomas Grace, of Stannington, Northumberland, was presented at a visitation for turning the riddle for things lost or stolen. (Hodgson.)

Charming.

Charmers and fortune-tellers, as distinct from witches, have long maintained their trade in the north of England, nor is the belief in "spaeing women" yet obsolete, even in the busiest haunts of industry on the Tyne or Wear. There are several examples recorded in the depositions before the Ecclesiastical Courts at Durham, which carry back the practice to a remote period. In October, 1446, Mariot de Belton and Isabella Brome

* Hodgson's *Hist. of Northumberland*, part ii. vol. ii. p. 329.

† *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 82, note.

were accused of this crime. The first was blamed for being a diviner by lots, and in particular of telling disengaged women desirous of being married that she had the power of causing them to obtain those on whom their affections were set. She had to clear herself by twelve hands of honest women, *i.e.* six people, her neighbours, who became security for her. Isabella for a similar cause was cleared by four hands. In October, 1450, Agnes Bowmer, late of Witton, was summoned for forecasting the future by lot. She as well as the others denied the allegations.* 23 March, 1451-2, Joh. Davison and Alicia Davison were summoned, and Alicia the mother compeared. It was alleged against her that she used divination by lot, which consisted in being a mediciner, in what manner is not specified, with lead and comb and iron ("utetur arte medical 'cum plumbo et pect' et ferro c") †. 4 Feb., 1566-67, John Lawson accused of defaming Margaret Lawson by calling her "a chermer," his reply being that it had been so reported.‡ In Oct. 20, 1663 one Nicholas Battersby, of Bowtham, in Yorkshire, exercised the art of a wise man, having had "skill in the discoveringe of those persons that had stolne moneyes; and where the monyes might bee found."§

Feb. 3, 1664-5, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, before Sir Francis Liddle, knight, mayor, Mrs. Pepper, midwife, was cited for using charms to remedy the afflicted. One Robert Pyle, pitman, was affected with fits, one of which lasted "the space of one houre and a halfe," and he was "most strangely handled." "And the said Mrs. Pepper did take water and throwed itt upon his face, and touke this informer's child, and another sucking

* *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 29.
† *Ibid.*, p. 33.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 84.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

child, and laid them to his mouth. And shee demanding the reason why she did soe, she replyed, that the breath of the children would suck the evill spirritt out of him, for he was possessed with an evill spirritt; and she said she would prove itt either before mayor or ministers that he was bewitched." Another female witness did see this Mrs. Pepper "call for a bottle of holy water, and tooke the same, and sprinkled itt upon a redd hott spot which was upon the back of his right hand; and did take a silver crucifix out of her breast, and laid itt upon the said spott. And did then say that shee knew by the said spott what his disease was, and did take the said crucifix and putt itt in his mouth." *

A still older example of charming by applying living animals to the mouth, in order to re-animate the sinking frame of the patient with fresh life, is recorded as happening at Wooler, on July 23rd, 1604, when the Vicar-General of the Bishop of Durham proceeded against Katherine Thompson and Anne Nevelson of Wooler, "pretended to be common charmers of sick folkes and their goodes, and that they use to bring white ducks or drakes, and to sett the bill thereof to the mouth of the sick person, and mumble upp their charmes in such a strange manner as is damnible and horrible." †

The disease called the thrush in the interior of the mouth prevents infants from imbibing their food. Aubrey gives a singular case, akin to the above, which he appears to have had from "an experienced midwife." "Take a living frog, and hold it in a cloth, that it does not go down into the child's mouth, till it is dead; and then take another frog and do the

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* *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 127.

† Visit. Book, Register Office, Durham; quoted also in *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 127, note.

same."* This distemper is actually called in North Northumberland "the frog in the mouth."

Feb. 16, 1653-4, John Tatterson of Gargreave, Yorkshire, "being disabled in body" and depressed in mind, "troubled with ill spiretts, who would have advised him to worshippt the enemye" has recourse to Ann Greene, a wise woman or mediciner, who cured him, for which he ought to have been grateful, but instead thereof becomes her accuser. "This informant went to the said Ann, tellinge her that hee was perswaded that she could helpe him, beeinge pained in his eare. The which disease shee told him that blacke wool was good for itt,† but he said that that was not the matter. Whereuppon she loosed the garter from her legg, and crossed his left eare 3 times therewith, and gott some heire outt of his necke, without his consent.

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* Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 144.

† "For Ulceration of the Ears. Take the seed of the ash, otherwise called the ashen keys, and boil briskly in the water of the sick man; foment the ear therewith and put some therein on *black wool*. By God's help it will cure it."—*The Physicians of Myddvai*, p. 327. "For Noise in the Head, preventing Hearing. Take a clove of garlic, prick in three or four places in the middle, dip in honey, and insert in the ear, covering it with some black wool," &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 338. Black wool is an ingredient in the charm, "which was made by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and shown to the three brethren, asking them where they went: we go said they to the ount of Olives, to gather herbs to heal wounds and contusions." &c.—*Ibid.*, p. 455. "New shorn wool, especially that of the neck of a *black sheep*, is good against wounds in the beginning, stroaks, desgrammations, bruises, and broaken bones, being soaked in vinegar, oile or wine, and is used in embrocations."—Lovell's *Panzoologicomineralogia*, p. 113, Oxford, 1661. This appears to be from Pliny and Dioscorides, but I do not find in either author mention of the wool of a black sheep. Among the Romans the victims offered to the infernal gods were black.

And he askeinge her what she would doe therewith, she tould him what matter was that to him, she would use it att her pleasure; goe his waye home and care nott. But, goeinge home, hee was more pained than beefore, and returneinge to her he told her to looke to itt or hee would looke to her. Where uppon she crost his eare three times againe, and promised hee should mend. And, accordingely, hee did, some corruptible matter runinge outt of his eare as itt did amend."

In her own defence she said, "that she sometimes useth a charme for cureing the heart each (ache), and used itt twice in one night unto John Tatterson of Gargreave, by crosseinge a garter over his eare and sayeinge these words, '*Boate, a God's name,*' 9 times over. Likewise for paines in the head, she requires their water and a locke of their heire, the which she boyles together, and afterwards throwes them in the fire and burnes them; and meddles nott with any other diseases."

Some of the pretensions of those impostors called wisemen are contained in the depositions, Jan. 19, 1673-4, before Robert Roddam, mayor of Newcastle, against Peter Banks, who cunningly took advantage of the popular credulity in a variety of ways, most likely to succeed, as being in consonance with the ideas of that age. Jane, wife of Cuthbert Burrell, shipwright, deposed that he persuaded people that he could let leases to people for a term of years and life, thereby insuring their lives for that period. "Whereupon divers seamen repair to him and putt trust in his conjurations, and pay him 20s. a peice for such leases." A year and a half previously he tried to impose upon her husband, who was accustomed to take sea voyages, by thrusting one of these fictitious leases into his hands. The wife having discovered the fraud "was mighty angry and much greived." The contents were these: "I charge you and all of you, in the high sword name, to assist and blesse Cuth. Burrell, belonging to—(such a ship)—from all rocks and sands, storms

and tempests thereunto belonging, for this yeare." This she indignantly thrust into the fire, on which account Banks "threatened he would plague" her, "that she should never be worth a groat," and he continued to molest her by his "strange stratagems." "The said Peter Banks hath often confessed to her and others that he used inchantments, conjuracions, and magick arts; and, in perticuler, in conjureing evil and malicious spiritts; and, espetially, about a young woman that lived in Gateshead, whose name she knows not, who came to him when the informer was present, and discovered about her being molested with a spirit and the like. Whereupon he looked in his books, and writt something out of the same into a paper and delivered it to that young woman. And told her that when the spirit appeared lett her open that paper, and she would be noe more molested. And afterwards, as Banks confessed, the same woman came back again, and gave him thanks and payment." He "made his cracks and boasts," "that he medicined and conjured an evill spirit that Thomas Newton's daughter was troubled with, and in the night time he burnt peices of paper in the fire written on for that end, and a certaine number in the night, at a certaine time, and used words that he had mastered the spirits. He likewise said that he could compell people that had ill husbands to be good to their wifes. And he did nominate one Jane Crossley, to whom he had letten a lease for that end, and had got 10s. and two new shirts for his pains; and that the same lease endured for a yeare, and, during that time, her husband was loveing and kind; but the yeare expireing, and she not renewing her lease, her said husband was ill and untoward againe. And he also declared that he could take away a man's life a yeare before his appointed time, or make him live a yeare longer." Ellinor Patteson, alias Phillips, alleged that contention having arisen between her and Banks, "she often in the night time was terrified with visions

and apparitions; and in such a manner as she thought the said Banks was standing up in flames of fire, and could never be att rest and quietnesse till she made agreement with him." Banks persuaded her that "she was wronged and bewitched and he could cure her. Therefore by his perswasions she permitted him to cutt a litle haire out of the back side of her neck in order to medicine and cure her. After which he putt the haire into a paper, and having sealed it upp, gave it again to the informer, and bidd her burne it. After which she amended and grew better." *

In an accusation of witchcraft, April 12, 1673, Mark Humble, of Healy, saith "that his mother, Margaret Humble, then lyeing not well, Isabell Thompson tooke some of her haire to medicine her." †

The Rev. James Raine remarks that the use of the hair of the sick person is derivable from classical antiquity.‡

Thomas Wilson, in his *Pitmain Pay*, p. 17, has these lines:

"Aw've just been ower wi' somethin' warm,
Te try to ease the weary cough,
Which baffles byeth the drugs and charm,
And threetens oft to tyek him off."

He adds in a note: "Quackery is not confined to drugs. The ignorant are often imposed upon by what designing knaves call 'charms;' and when the former fail recourse is had to the latter."

Wilson notices another charmer and fortune-teller, who once carried on a great traffic near Brampton, and transmitted the profession to her daughter, who was still more a proficient.

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* *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, pp. 204, 205.

† *Ibid.*, p. 201.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 64, note.

Elizabeth or Lizzy Douglas "lived near Brampton, and carried on the craft of fortune-telling, recovering things stolen or strayed, and restoring cattle that laboured under diseases inflicted by witchcraft. She was the oracle of the vicinity for many miles round, and sent many a forlorn maiden away with a light heart; for, after bamboozling and mystifying the inquirer with a variety of questions, so as almost to make her say what she wanted to be told, she delighted her with the initials of the name of the swain of her choice, not forgetting, however, whilst shuffling the cards, to shuffle the money from the girl's pocket into her own. She was once applied to for assistance in the case of some cattle that were 'dwining away' under the power of witchcraft. She was rather puzzled how to act in this matter; but, after applying her fertile mind to it for some time, she came to the conclusion that slitting their tails and putting pieces of rowan-tree into the opening would free them from the power that was destroying them. This, of course, was tried; but the owners of the cattle declared that it had no effect upon the disease, and that they might as well have 'laid salt on their tails.' Lizzy, no doubt, often missed her mark on these occasions; but she sometimes made a lucky hit, which kept her fame afloat with the dupes that consulted her. She has been dead many years; but her daughter, it is said, has succeeded to the business, and inherits the rare qualities of her far-famed parent." *

At Wooler, to cure the stye a gold ring is applied nine times to the place affected, also the cat's tail if the eye is rubbed with it.

A charm there for a new tooth was to wrap the tooth in a

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* *The Pitman's Pay and Other Poems*, by Thomas Wilson, p. 85, note.

piece of paper along with some salt and cast it into the fire, saying:

"Fire, fire, burn byen,
Lord, send me my tuith agyen."

This is customary among children in the south of Scotland, the saying being:

"Fire, fire, burn bane,
And send me my tooth again."

To obtain a clock at a raffle, sit crossed-leg and you will be sure to get it.

Anne Baites and Others; for Witchcraft.

"April 2, 1673. Before Humphrey Mitford, Esq. Ann Armstrong, of Birchen-nooke, spinster, saith, that Ann, wife of Thomas Baites, of Morpeth, tanner, hath beene severall times in the company of the rest of the witches, both att Barwick, Barrasford, and at Ridingbridg-end, and once att the house of Mr. Francis Pye, in Morpeth, in the seller there. The said Ann Baites hath severall times danced with the divell att the places aforesaid, calling him, sometimes, her protector, and, other sometimes, her blessed saviour. He hath seen the said Ann Baites severall times att the places aforesaid rideing upon wooden dishes and egg-shells, both in the rideinge house and in the close adjoyninge. She further saith that the said Ann hath been severall times in the shape of a catt and a hare, and in the shape of a greyhound and a bee, letting the divell see how many shapes she could turn herself into.

"April 4. Before Sir Richard Stote. The same witness saith, that since she gave information against severall persons who ridd her to severall places where they had conversation with the divell, she hath beene severall times lately ridden by Anne Driden and Anne Forster, and was last night ridden by them to the rideing house in the close on the common, where

the said Anne Forster, Anne Driden, Lucy Thompson, John Crauforth, Wm. Wright, Elizabeth Pickering, Anne Usher, Michaell Aynesley, and Margaret his wife, and one Margarett, whose surname she knowes not, but she said to the protector she came from Corbridge, and thre more, whose names she knowes not, were all present with their protector, and had all sorts of meates and drinkes they named, siltt * upon the table by pulling a rope, and they tooke the bridle of this informant, and made her singe to them whilst they danced; and all of them who had donne harme gave an account thereof to their protector, who made most of them that did most harme, and beate those who had donne no harme. And Mary Hunter said she had killed George Taylor's filly, and had power over his mare, and that she had power of the farre hinder leg of Johne Marche.

"Feb. 5, 1672-3. Newcastle-on-Tyne, before Ralph Jenison. Anne Armstrong, of Birks-nooke, saith, that, being servant to one Mable Fouler of Burtree House, in August last, her dame sent her to seeke eggs of one Anne Foster, of Stocksfield; but as they could not agree for the price, the said Anne desired her to sitt downe and looke her head, which 'accordingly' she did. And then the said Anne lookt this informant's head. And, when they had done, she went home. And, about three days after, seekeing the cowes in the pasture, a little after day-breake, she mett, as she thought, an old man with ragg'd cloaths, who askt this informant where she was on the Friday last. She tould him she was seekeing eggs at Stocksfield. So he tould her that the same woman that lookt her head should be the first that made a horse of her spirrit, and who should be the next that would ride her; and into what shape and likenesses she should be changed, if she would turne to there God.

* *Sile*, Northumbrian, is to percolate, to flow; also, to strain, to purify milk through a straining dish.—Brockett's *North Country Words*.

And with all tould this informer how they would use all meanes they could to allure her: first, by there tricks, by rideing in the house in empty wood dishes that had never beene wett, and also in egg shells, and how to obtaine whatever they desired by swinging in a rope; and with severall dishes of meate and drinke. But, if she eate not of their meate, they could not harme her. And, at last, tould her how it should be divulged by eateing a piece of cheese, which should be laid by her when she laie downe in a field, with her apron cast over her head, and so left her. But after he was gone she fell suddainely downe dead and continued dead till towards six that morneing. And, when she arose, went home, but kept all these things secrett. And since that time, for the most parte every day, and sometimes two or three times in the day, she has taken of these fitts, and continued as dead often from evening till cockcrow. And whilst she was lying in that condition, which happened one night a little before Christmas, about the change of the moone, this informant see the said Anne Forster come with a bridle, and bridled her and ridd upon her crosse-legged, till they came to (the) rest of her companions at Rideing Millne bridg-end, where they usually mett. And when she light of her back, pull'd the bridle of this informer's head, now in the likenesse of a horse; but, when the bridle was taken of, she stood up in her own shape, and then she see the said Anne Forster, Anne Dryden, of Prudhoe, and Luce Thompson, of Mickley, and teune more unknowne to her, a long black man rideing on a bay galloway, as she thought, which they called there protector. And when they had hankt theire horses, they stood all upon a bare spott of ground, and bad this informer sing whilst they danced in severall shapes, first of a hare, then in their owne, and then in a catt, sometimes in a mouse, and in severall other shapes. And when they had done, bridled this informer, and the rest of the horses, and rid home with their protector

first. And for six or seaven nights together they did the same. And the last night this informer was with them they mett all at a house called the Rideing house, where she saw Forster, Dryden, and Thompson, and the rest, and theire protector, which they call'd their god, sitting at the head of the table in a gold chaire, as she thought; and a rope hanging over the roome, which every one touch'd three several times, and whatever was desired was sett upon the table, of several kindes of meate and drinke; and when they had eaten, she that was last drew the table, and kept the reversions. This was their custome which they usually did. But when this informer used meanes to avoyd theire company they came in their owne shapes, and threatned her, if she would not turne to theire god, the last shift should be the worst. And from that time they have not troubled her. But further saith that, on St. John day last, being in the field, seeking sheep, she sitt downe, being weary, and cast her apron over her head. And when she got upp she found a piece cheese lying at her head; which she tooke up and brought home, and did eate of it, and since that time hath disclosed all which she formerly kept secrett.

"Apr. 9, 1673. At the Sessions at Morpeth, before Sir Thomas Horsley and Sir Richard Stote, knights, James Howard, Humphrey Mitford, Ralph Jenison, and John Salkeld, Esqrs.

"Anne Armstrong, of Birks-nuke, spinster, saith, that the information she hath already given is truth. She now further saith that Lucy Thompson, of Mickley, widdow, upon Thursday in the evening, being the 3rd of Aprill, att the house of John Newton off the Riding, swinging upon a rope which went crosse the balkes, she, the said Lucy, wished that a boyl'd capon with silver scrues might come down to her and the rest, which were five coveys consisting of thirteen person in every covey; and that the said Lucy did swing twice, and then the said capon with silver scrues did, as she thinketh, come downe, which

capon the said Lucy sett before the rest of the company, whereof the divell, which they called their protector, and sometimes their blessed saviour, was their cheif, sitting in a chair like unto bright gold. And the said Lucy further did swing, and demanded the plum-broth which the capon was boyled in, and thereupon it did immediately come down in a dish, and likewise a botle of wine which came down upon the first swing.

"She further saith that Ann, the wife of Richard Forster off Stocksfeild, did swing upon the rope, and, upon the first swing, she gott a cheese, and upon the second she got a beakment* of wheat flower, and upon the third swing she gott about halfe a quarter of butter to knead the said flower withall, they haveing noe power to gett water.

"She further saith that Margret, the wife of Michaell Aynsley of Riding did swing, and she gott a flackett† of ale containing, as she thought, about three quarts, a kening‡ of wheat flowers for pyes, and a peice of beife.

"She further saith that every person had their swings in the said rope, and did gett several dishes of provision upon their severall swings according as they did desire; which this informant cannot repeat or remember, there beinge soe many persons and such variety of meat; and those that come last att the said meeting did carry away the remainder of the meat.

"And she further saith that she particularly knew at the said meeting one Michael Aynsly of the Rideing, Mary Hunter of Birkenside, widdow, Dorothy Green of Edmondsbyers in the county of Durham, widdow, Anne Usher of Fairlymay, widdow, Eliz. Pickering of Whittingeslaw, widdow, Jane wife of Wm. Makepeace of New Ridley, yeo., Anthony Hunter of Birken-

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* Beatmont, a measure containing about a quarter of a peck.

† Flackett, a flask or wood-bottle.

‡ Kening, half a bushel.

side, yeo., John Whitfield of Edmondbyers, Anne Whitfield of the same, spinster, Chr. Dixon of Muglesworth Park and Alice his wife, Catherine Ellot of Ebchester, Elsabeth Atchinson of Ebchester widdow, and Issabell Andrew of Crooked-oake, widdow, with many others, both in Morpeth and other places, whose faces this informer knowes but cannot tell their names. All which persons had their severall meetings at diverse other places at other times: viz., upon Collup Monday last, being the tenth of February, the said persons met at Allensford, where this informant was ridden upon by an inchanted bridle by Michael Aynsly and Margaret his wife; which inchanted bridle, when they tooke it of from her head, she stood upp in her owne proper person, and see all the said persons beforemencioned danceing, some in the likenesse of hares, some in the likenesse of catts, others in the likenesse of bees, and some in their owne likenesse, and made this informant sing till they danced, and every thirteen of them had a divell with them in sundry shapes And at the said meeting their particular divell tooke them that did most evill, and danced with them first, and called every of them to an account, and those that did most evill he maid most of.

"And this informant saith that she can very well remember the particular confessions that the severall persons hereunder named made to the devill then and there, as well as at other times: and first Lucy Thompson of Mickly confessed to the divell that she had wronged Edward Lumly of Mickly goods by witcheing them; and in particular one horse by pincing to death, and one ox which suddainly dyed in the draught, and the devill incouraged her for it.

"Ann Drydon of Pruddoe confessed to the devill that, on the Thursday night after Fasten's even last, when they were drinking wine in Franck Pye's seller in Morpeth, that shee witched suddenly to death her neighbor's horse in Pruddoe.

"Anne wife of Richard Forster of Stocksfield confessed that she bewitched Robert Newton's horses of Stocksfield, and that there was one of them that had but one shew on, which she took and presented with the foot and all to the divell at next meeting. And she further confessed to her protector that she had power of a childe of the said Robert Newton's called Issabell, ever since she was four yeare olde, and she is now about eight yeares old, and she is now pined to nothing, and continues soe.

"Moreover Michael Ainsly and Anne Drydon confessed to the divell that they had power of Mr. Thomas Errington's horse, of Rideing mill, and they ridd behinde his man upon the said horse from Newcastle like two bees, and the horse immediately after he came home, dyed; and this was but about a moneth since.

"The said Anne Forster, Michaell Ainsly, and Lucy Thompson confessed to the divell, and the said Michaell told the divell that he called 3 severall times at Mr. Errington's kitchen dore, and made a noise like an host of men. And that night, the divell asking them how they sped, they answered nothing, for they had not got power of the miller, but they got the shirt of his bak, as he was lyeing betwixt women, and laid it under his head and stroke him dead another time, in revenge he was an instrument to save Raiph Elrington's draught from goeing downe the water and drowneing, as they intended to have done. And that they confessed to the divell that they made all the geer goe of the mill, and that they intended to have made the stones all grinde till they had flowne all in peeces.

"Mary Hunter confessed to the divill that she had wronged George Tayler of Edgebrigg's goods, and told her protector that she had gotten the power of a fole of his soe that it pined away to death. And she had gott power of the dam of the said fole, and that they had an intention, the last Thursday at night, to

have taken away the power of the limbs of the said mare. About Michaelmas last she did come to one John Marsh, of Edgebrigg, when he and his wife was rideing from Bywell, and flew sometimes under his mare's belly and sometimes before its breast, in the likenesse of a swallow, untill she got the power of it, and it dyed within a week after. And she and Dorothy Green confessed to the divill that they got power of the said John Marshe's oxe's far hinder legg. And this is all within the space of a year halfe or thereabouts.

"Ann Usher, of Fairly May, confessed to the divell that by his help she was a medciner, and that she had within a little space done £100 hurt to one George Stobbart, of New Ridly, in his goods. And that she and Jane Makepeace, of New Ridly, had trailed a horse of the said Geo. doune a great scarr, and that they have now power of a greye of the said Geo., which now pines away.

"Elizabeth Pickering, of Whittingstall, widdow, confessed, that she had power of a neighbor's beasts of her owne in Whittingstall, and that she had killed a child of the said neighbor's.

"And this informer saith that all the said persons were frequently at the meetings and rideings with the divill, and craved his assistance, and consulted with him about all the aforesaid accions.

"She further saith that Jane Hopper of the Hill confessed to the divill that she had power over Wm. Swinburne, of Newfeild, for near the space of two yeares last past, by which is sore pined, and she hopes to have his life. And Anthony Hunter, of Birkenside, confessed he had power over Anne, wife of Thomas Richardson, of Crooked Oak; that he tooke away the power of her limbs, and askt the divill's assistance to take away her life. And Jane Makepeace was at all the meetings among the witches, and helped to destroy the goods of George Stobbart.

"And this informer deposeth that Ann Drydon had a lease for fifty yeares of the divill, whereof ten ar expired. Ann Forster had a lease of her life for 47 yeares, whereof seaven are yet to come. Lucy Thompson had a lease of two and forty, whereof two are yet to come, and, her lease being near out, they would have persuaded this informer to have taken a lease of thre score yeares or upwards, and that she should never want gold or mony, or, if she had but one cow, they should let her know a way to get as much milk as them that had tenn.

"And further this informer cannot as yet well remember."

"Apr. 21, 1673. The said witness, Anne Armstrong, deposes further before Ralph Jenison, Esq.

"On Monday last, at night, she, being in her father's house, see one Jane Baites, of Corbridge, come in the forme of a gray catt with a bridle hanging on her foote, and breathed upon her and struck her dead, and bridled her and rid upon her in the name of the devill southward, but the name of the place she does not now remember. And after the said Jane allighted and pulld the bridle of her head, and she and the rest had drawne their compasse nigh to a bridg end, and the devil placed a stone in the middle of the compasse, they sett themselves downe, and bending towards the stone, repeated the Lord's prayer backwards. And when they had done the devill, in the forme of a little black man and black cloaths, calld of one Isabell Thompson, of Slealy, widdow, by name, and required of her what service she had done him. She replyd she had gott power of the body of one Margarett Teasdale. And after he had danced with her he dismissed her, and call'd of one Thomasine, wife of Edward Watson, of Slealy, who confessed to the devill that she had likewise power of the body of the said Margaret Teasdale, and would keepe power of her till she gott her life.

"At severall of their meetings she has seene Michall Aynsley and Margaret his wife, now prisoners in his Ma^ties^ goale, and

Jane Baites, of Corbridge, ride upon one James Anderson, of Corbridge, chapman, to their meetings, and hankt him to a stobb, whilst they were at their sports, and when they had done, ridd upon him homeward.

"May 12. She further saith that on the second day of May laste, at night, the witches carried her to Berwicke bridge end, where she see a greate number of them, and amongste the reste she see one Ann Parteis, of Hollisfeild, and heard her declare to the devill that she did enter into the house of one John Maughan, of the pareshe of Haydon, and found his wife's rocke lyinge upon the table. And she tooke up the rocke to spinne of it, and by spinneinge of the rocke she had gotten the power of the said Anne that she should never spinne more, and would still torment her till she had her life.

"May 14. She being brought into Allandaile by the parishiners, for the discovery of witches, Isabell Johnson, being under suspition, was brought before her, and she breathing uppon the said Anne immediately the said Anne did fall downe in a sound and laid three quarters of an houre, and after her recovery she said if there were any witches in England Isabell Johnson was one.

"At Morpeth Sessions as aforesaid Robert Johnson, of Rydeing Mill, saith that about the latter end of August last, late at night, lyeing in his bed at Rydeing Mill, betwixt two of his fellow-servants, he herd a man, as he thought, call at the dore and ask whoe was within. Upon which this informant rose and went and layd his head against the chamber window to know whoe it was that called, and he heard a great noise of horse feet, as though it had been an army of men. Whereupon he called, but none would answer. Soe he returned to his bed, and the next morneinge, riseing out of his bed, he wanted his shirt, which seeking after he accused his two fellow-servants, which were amazed at the thing and denyed that ever they knew of it,

which this informant further searching after, found it lapt upp under his pillow at his bed head. He further saith, that Mr. Errington's draught, and Ra. Elrington's, being away at Stiford leading tyth corne there, and being late in comeing home, this informer could not rest satisfyed, but went to seek the draughts and to know what was become of them, and met them comeing out of Stiford towne end, and came homeward with them, till they came to the water. And Mr. Errington's draught being got through he herd the people with the other draught cry that they were goeing downe the water. And then he got on to a horse and rode downe after them some 3 score yards or thereabouts, where he came to them just at the entring into a great deep pool, where, if he had not made great help, they might have been lost, both men and beasts. And getting them turned and brought upp to the other draught they came all home together, and this informant haveing loosed the beasts out of his maister's draught and goeing to bed, was that night suddainly strucken dead in the kitchen to the sight of his fellow-servant. He further saith that, about some sixteen dayes before Christmas last, he could not by any means he could use gett the mill sett, and about the hinder end of Christmas hollidayes, being sheeling some oates about two hours before the sunn-setting, all the geer, viz^{t}, hopper and hoops, and all other things but the stones, flew down and were casten of, and he himselfe almost killed with them, they comeing against him with such force and violence.

"He further saith that, about a moneth since, one Wm. Olliver, his fellow-servant, went to Newcastle in the morneing and rode upon a gray gelding of his master's, which, to all their sights, was as well and as good like as any horse could bee. And his fellow-servant sayed that he came as well home and rode as heartily ass any horse could doe. And after he is come home this informant went to the dore and tooke the horse

by the bridle and led him into the stable where he usualley stood. And there haveing him in his hand by the bridle reen, and haveing not gott him fastened nor out of his hand, till suddainly the horse rushed downe, he being not hott at all with rideing; and soe continued a good while, sometimes lookeing very cheerily about him, and other sometimes striveing, as it were for life and death, soe that this informer was forced to goe to bed and leave him, and in the morneing when he came to the stable again he found him lyeing dead, and takeing him out of the stable they rippt him upp to see what might be the cause, and could finde nothing, but that the horse was all right enough in his body.

"John March, of Edgebrigg, yeoman, saith, that, about a month since, he went to a place called Birkside nook, and there Ann Armstrong heareing him named began to speak to him and askt him if he had not an ox that had the power of one of his limbs taken from him. And he telling her he had, and inquireing how she came to know, she told him that she heard Mary Hunter, of Birkside, and another, at a meeting amongst diverse witches, confesse to the divell that they had taken the power of that beast; and she not knowing her name Sir James Clavering and Sir Richard Stote thought proper to carry her to Edenbyers, and there to cause the woman to come to her ther, to the intent she might challenge her. And she challenged one Dorothy Green, a widdow, and she said she was the person that joyned with Mary Hunter in the bewithcheing of the said ox. And the ox now continues lame and has noe use of his farr hinder legg, but pines away, and likely to dye. He saith that Ann Armstrong told him that the said persons confessed before the devill that they bewitched a gray mare of his, and he saith that about a fortnight before Michaelmas last, he and his wife were rideing home from Bywell on a Sunday at night upon the same mare, about sun-sett; and there came a swallow, which

above forty times and more flew through under the mare's belly, and crossed her way before her brest. And this informant strook at it with his rod above twenty times and could by no meanes hinder it, untill of its owne accord it went away. And the mare went very well home, and within four dayes dyed; and, before she dead, was two dayes soe mad that she was past holding, and was strucke blinde for four-and-twenty houres before she dead.

"He further saith, that the said Mary Hunter came downe to his house on Monday last, where he had Ann Armstrong, and she askt her what she had to say to her. And she told her that she was a witch, and that she had seen her at the devill's meetinges. The other askt her where, and she answered, "In this same house, last night, being Sunday, amongst all the companye." And the said informer saith, that that very night when she said they mett, he was was soe sore affrighted that he was in a manner dead; and afterward comeing to himselfe againe he herd a great thundering and saw a great lighteninge in the house, and to the number of twenty creatures in the resemblances of catts, and other shapes, lyeing on the floores and creeping upon the walls. And immediately after I herd the girll singing to them. And his servants, being in bed with the young woman, awakened, and came downe out of the roome where the girll lay and said, "Alas! the witches were gone with the girll." And he went upp and found her body lyeing in the bed, as she were dead, neither breath nor life being discerned in her; and continued soe for the most part of an hour till he fetched in two or three of his neighbors to see her in that condition. And presently after they came in she began to stir and open her eyes and loked on them for about an hour before she spake anything. And when she spoke she said that all the companyes were there, and were endeavouringe to get her away, but were prevented. And further he saith, the said

Ann Armstrong enquired of the said Mary Hunter for her sonn Anton, and there being one of her sons called Cuthbert, wee told her that he was the man she askt for, which she denyed, and said that it was not the man, for she knew him very well and had seen him severall tymes at their meetings; and desired her to send him downe, and a lass that she, the said Mary, severall times ride upon and singe unto them, and she would resolve her whether it were they or not. Thereupon Anton afterwards came downe and questioned her what she had to say to him. She said she would lett him know at the sessions, hearing he was to be there; and because he had threatened her she would say noe more, but told this informer, after he was gone, that Anton had confessed before the devill he had taken the power of Anne, wife of Tho. Richardson of Crooked Oaks' limbs from her, and had likewise bewitched several cattle to death. And further saith, that he knowes that the said Ann Richardson is in a very bad condicion, being sometimes able to goe, and other times that she cannot goe without help. He never see the said Ann in his life before, neither, to his knowledge, was she ever where he was, nor never sawe none of his beasts, but told him all this when he went to see her.

"Geo. Tayler, of Edgebridge, yeoman, saith, that coming to Birkside nook to speak with one Ann Armstrong, whoe had oftentimes formerly desired to have seen him, and she being asleep upon a bed, her sister awakened her and raised her, and being asked if she knew him or could name him, she answered that if he were the man that had a fole lately dead, and if he lived at Edgebrigg, his name was Geo. Tayler. Upon his demanding on her how she came to know it, she told him that she herd Mary Hunter of Birkenside, widdow, confesse it before the divell at meetinge they had that she had gotten the power and the life of his fole. The said fole began not to be well about Michaelmas last, and dyed about a moneth since, and it

had noe naturall disease to his knowledge, but often swelled in severall parts of the body of it; and its head and lipps would have been sore swelld, and letten him have endeavoured never soe often to blood it, thinking thereby to prevent its death, he could never get any in noe part of the body of it. And when it was dead, he opened it to see if there were any blood or not, and he saith that he thinks, very, a quart pott would have holden all that it had and more, and that litle that it had was all drawne about the heart thereof.

"He saith that Ann Armestrong told him that she heard when the said Mary Hunter and Dorothy Green, of Edmondbyers, confesse to the devill that they had the power of his oxen and kyne, horses and mares, and that now, at this present, he has a grey mare, the dam of the said fole, pineing away, and in the same condition that the fole was in. And he thinks that all his goods doe not thrive, nor are like his neighbours goods, notwithstanding he feeds them as well as he can, but are like anatomyes.

"Apr. 21, 1673. Marke Humble, of Slealy, tayler, saith, that he, betwixt 7 and 8 yeares agoe, walking towards the high end of Slealy, mett one Isabell Thompson walking downward. And when she was gone past him, she being formerly suspected of witchcraft, he lookt back over his shoulder and did see the said Isable hould up her hands towards his back. And when he came home he grew very sick, and tould the people in the house that he was afraid Isabell Thompson had done him wrong. And for some 3 or 4 yeares continued very ill by fitts in a most violent manner, to the sight and admiration of all his neighbours. And whilst he continued in this distemper, the said Isabell came to his house and said it was reported she had bewitched him. She tould him if it were so it would soone be knowne. And further saith, that his mother Margaret Humble then lyeing not well, Isabell Thompson tooke some of

her haire to medicine her." *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, pp. 191—201.

All the accused persons denied their guilt, but the result of the affair is not known.

Two volumes issued by the Surtees Society, *Depositions and other Ecclesiastical Proceedings from the Courts of Durham, extending from* 1311 *to the Reign of Elizabeth* (1845), and *Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to Offences committed in the Northern Counties in the Seventeenth Century* (1861), contain a large assemblage of witchcraft cases from the Northern English Counties, to which only a limited reference can be made, for the more salient features. The first case on record is that of Margaret Lyndyssay along with another woman, in the parish of Edlyngeham, Northumberland, who—1 Feb. 1435—cleared herself of the imputation of being an enchantress, whereof she had been blamed by John de Longcaster, John Somerson, and John Symson.* 16 Feb. 1447-8, Mariot Jacson, accused of the same crime, was, on the favourable testimony of her neighbours, restored to her pristine good credit.† About 1569 one Margaret Reed, apparently of Newcastle, had been misrepresented as being a "water wych."‡ 17th May, 1572, at Stockton, two foolish women revile each other, and one of them, Elizabeth Anderson, called her neighbour, Annie Barden, "crowket handyd wytch," the accusation being aggravated by the words being shouted out "audiently," where "might many have herd them, beinge spoken so neigh the crosse and in the toune gait as they were."§ 18 Jan. 1574, Margaret Shafto, of Throkeley, Northd., bears testimony that Janet Wilkinson did call Katherine Anderson "hange lipped witche;" and another witness from the same place "did heare the said

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* *Depositions*, p. 27.
† P. 29.
‡ P. 91.
§ P. 247.

Janet Wilkinson call Katheryne Anderson 'clarted witche,' and that 'she had comen of Hedden-on-the-Wall for his good deedes doinge.' * 15 July, 1586, a case of chiding deposed on, which took place at Blaidon, parish of Ryton, between Arthur Bell and John Robson, wherein the cause of offence was that Robson said to Bell, "Thou haist a witch to thy eld-mother, and why cannot the young theef learne at the old?" this "eld-mother" being Isabell Chamber, Bell's wife's mother.†

These instances of defamation give place in the succeeding century to full-framed articles of accusation. December 31, 1646, Elizabeth Crossley and others, of Hepten Hall, in Yorkshire, are accused of maliciously, on being refused alms, causing young children to take convulsions, whereof they died, a stroke with a candlestick to draw blood from the reputed witch having proved ineffectual, although temporarily affording relief, to counteract Crossley's influence. Her confederate, Mary Midgeley, being denied an almes of wool, and obtaining instead thereof an alms of milk, from Martha the wife of Richard Wood, of Hepten Hall, "shee departed very angry." The consequence was that the day after six of the milch kine fell sick. Upon this Mrs. Wood hied away to the woman, and confessed her fault in slighting her, "and desired her to remedie it if she could. Longe it was before shee would take too that shee had done it, but at last tooke six pence of her, and wished her to goe home, for the kyne should mende, and desired her to take for every cow a handfull of salte and an old sickle, and lay underneath them, and, if they amended not, then to come to her againe." Mary Midgeley confessed that Martha Wood came to her to "aske her advise touchinge one of her kyne whose mylke earned in the gallin;" whereupon she told her that she had "learned of one Issabel Robinson who had

* P. 313. † P. 318.

good skill (if anythinge were gone), and shee wished her to take a litle salte and old yron, lay it under the cow, and pray to God for mend." The others denied the charges, and probably nothing came of it.* March 18, 1648-9, a girl, daughter of Dorothy Rodes of Bolling, is frightened into convulsions by conceiving that she is haunted by one Mary Sykes, who had an evil repute, as well as by the likeness two other women, one of whom had been dead two years previously. Richard Booth, of Bolling, had often heard Mary Sykes say to him, "Bless the," and "I'le crosse the," and "had much loss by the death of his goods." To Henry Cordingley, of Tonge, Mary Sikes had said "since Christenmus was twelve monthes, that he had nyne or tenn beasts and horses, but she 'wold make them fewer,' and 'Bless the,' but 'I'le cross the.' He further saith that, some three dayes before the saide Cristenmas, he goeing to fother horses, about 12 o'clock in the night, with a candle and lanthorn, his beasts standing neare his horses, he sawe the said Mary Sikes riding upon the backe of one of his cowes. And he, endeavouring to strike att her, stumbled, and soe the saide Mary flewe out of his mistall windowe, haveing three or fower wooden stanchions, the saide cowe being then white over with an imy sweate. And he likewise saith that he had one blacke horse, worth 4£ 16s., begunn to be sicke about Tewsday was a fortnight, and continewed dithering and quakeing till Sonday following, and then dyed. And he, opening the saide horse, could not finde an eggshell full of blood. And he is verily perswaded that the saide horse was bewitched. And he saith, allsoe, that a blacke meare of his hath beene sicke in like manner as the former horse was, since about Tewsday last was a fortnight, till the tyme that the saide Mary was searched by the weomen; but, since that, she hath recovered and amended,

* *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, pp. 6-9.

and eates her meate verie well." Five women sworn as searchers did indeed find "upon her left side neare her arme a litle lumpe like a wart, and being pulled out it stretcht about halfe an inch. And they further say that they never sawe the like upon anie other weomen." The jury were incredulous, and Mary Sykes was acquitted.*

10 Jan., 1650-1, Margaret Morton, of Kirkethorpe, was accused at Wakefield of giving a little boy of about four years old, "then in good health and likeing, a peece of bread," after which the child "begann to bee sicke, and his body swelled very much, and his flesh did daly after much waste, till he could neither goe nor stand." The mother mistrusting Morton sent for her, and she submitted to ask the child forgiveness three times, "and then this informant drew bloud of her with a pin, and immediately after the child amended." In addition to this the informant "at divers times" "could not get butter when she chirned nor cheese when she earned." Four women searched Morton and found two black spots, one whereof "was black on both sides, an inch broad, and blew in the middest." Besides being long suspected for a witch, her mother and sister, who were then both dead, "were suspected to be the like." She was tried at the assizes and acquitted. In September, 1650, a woman called Ann Hudson, of Skipsey, in Holderness, was charged with witchcraft. The sick person had recovered after he had scratched her and drawn blood.†

Jan. 23, 1651-2, Hester France, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, "a reputed witch for above twenty years," cured a servant girl, "and prayed to God that she shold never bake again," whereupon she is seized with catalepsy. The reputed witch is prevailed on to visit her and submits to be scratched, and the symptoms are considerably abated. Another person

* *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

† *Ibid.*, p. 38 and note.

ailing for half a year, sends for her—patient woman as she was—"and she being come into the chamber he scratcht her very sore, and sayde, 'I think thou art the woman that hath done me this wrong,' and then she answred and sayde that she never did hurt in her life."*

March 17, 1652-3. One Elizabeth Lambe is accused by several sick people of doing them harm, and like the poor woman in the preceding instance she has to submit to various indignities for being so notorious. She frightened John Jonson, of Reednes, by appearing to him at night, accompanied by an old man in brown clothes, whereupon "his goods fell sick, and the farrier could not tell what disease they were ill of." When others of his neighbours had received loss "in their goods, which they did conceive this Eliz. Lambe to be the author of, they also did beat her, and was never afterwards disquieted by her." The constable had a child sick, whereupon "his wife meeting the said Eliz. at her owne doore, she did fall downe on her knees and asked her forgiveness, and the child did soone after recover." Nicholas Baldwin, of Rednes, declared that about the year 1648 she drowned him "thre younge foles ever as they were foled, by witchcraft," whereat Baldwin, enraged beyond measure, did beat her with his cane, and he declared in his evidence, "had it not bene for my wife, because she sat doune of hir knesse and aske me forgivenes, I had bet her worse." She also cruelly handled one Richard Browne at the heart in his sickness by drawing "his heart's blood from him." The sick man thought he would get better if he could draw blood from her, who had so drained him of life's stream, and she being brought to him by a wile, Browne said to her, "Bes, thou hast wronged me. Why dost thou soe? If thou wilt doe soe no more I will forgive thee." And she answered

* *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.

nothing. He then scratched her till the blood came, but within a week after he died."*

The case of Elizabeth Roberts, Oct. 14, 1654, may be given entire. "John Greencliffe, of Beverley, sayth, that on Saturday last, about seaven in the evening, Elizabeth Roberts [who was the wife of a joiner at Beverley, and denied any knowledge of what was charged against her] did appeare to him in her usuall wearing clothes, with a ruff about her neck, and, presently vanishing, turned herself into the similitude of a catt, which fixed close about his leg, and, after much strugling, vanished; whereupon he was much pained at his heart. Upon Wednesday there seized a catt upon his body, which did strike him on the head, upon which he fell into a swound or traunce. After he received the blow, he saw the said Elizabeth escape upon a wall in her usuall wearing apparell. Upon Thursday she appeared unto him in the likenesse of a bee, which did very much afflict him, to witt, in throwing of his body from place to place, notwithstanding there were five or six persons to hold him doune."† The bee was in his bonnet, no doubt of it. Another cat case is reported of date at Newcastle, Nov. 10, 1663, before Sir James Clavering, Bart., mayor, wherein Jane, wife of Wm. Milburne, of Newcastle, imagined that "Fryday gone a seaven night, about 8 o'clock att night, she being alone and in chamber, there appeared to her something in the perfect similitude and shape of a catt. And the said catt did leape at her face, and did vocally speake with a very audible voyce, and saide, that itt had gotten the life of one in this house, and came for this informer life, and would have itt before Saturday night. To which she replyed, 'I defye the, the devill and all his works.' Upon which the catt did vanish. The second time the cat appeared, "the said catt did violently leape aboute her neck and

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Ibid., p. 58. † *Ibid.*, p. 67.

shoulders, and was soe ponderous that she was not able to support itt, but did bring her doune to the ground," and kept her there for a quarter of an hour. On the third occasion it attempted to pull her out of bed, if her husband had not held her fast. This cat she believed was Dorothy Stranger, the wife of a cooper, who had threatened her, "and non else. And she haveinge a desire to see her did this morneing send for the said Dorothy, butt she was very loth to come, and comeing to her she gott blood of her, at the said Stranger's desire, and since hath been pritye well." The dress of the witch of the period is preserved for us by this witness. The cat was not a black but a grey one. "And itt did transforme ittselfe into the shape of the said Dorothy Stranger, in the habit and clothes she weares dayly, haveing an old black hatt upon her head, a greene waistcoate, and a brounish coloured petticoate."* Another woman, at Newcastle, Jane Watson, a medicine and reputed witch, wore, in 1661, "a red waistcoate and greene petticoate."† A third, named Isabell Atcheson, wore a "green waistcoate."‡ Dress was not one of the items in which witches differed from other people.

Jan. 11, 1654-5. Katherine Earle was accused of having struck Henry Hatefield, of Rhodes, parish of Rodwell, gent., upon the neck "with a docken stalke, or such like thing, and his maire upon the necke also, whereupon his maire imediately fell sicke and he himselfe was very sore troubled and perplexed with a paine in his necke." She had also clapt one Mr. Franke, late of Rhodes, between the shoulders with her hand, and said, "You are a pretty gentlemen; will you kisse me? Whereupon the said Mr. Franke fell sicke before he gott home, and never went out of doors after, but dyed, and complained much against the said Katherine on his death-bed."§ Katherine

* *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 114.
† *Ibid.*, p. 93.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 125.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

having been searched, a mark was found upon her "in the likenesse of a rapp."

In the case of Jennet and George Benton, June 7, 1656, at a farm called Bunny Hall, near Wakefield, Richard Jackson, the occupant, besides grievous torment as if he were "drawne in peices at the hart, backe and shoulders," hears singular noises "like ringing of small bells, with singinge and dancinge," accompanied with groans. At last he, his wife and servant, heard three heavy groans, and "at that instant doggs did howle and yell at the windows, as though they would have puld them in peeces. He had also a great many swine which broake thorrow two barn dores. Also the dores in the howse at that time clapt to and fro; the boxes and trunkes, as they conceived, was removed; and severall aparitions like black doggs and catts was seene in the house. And he saith that, since the time the said Jennet and George Benton threatned him, he hath lost 18 horses and meares." *

In such cases complaints were common of the heart being racked with pains. Frances Mason, daughter of a soldier at Tynemouth, Feb. 15, 1659-60, having lost the power of her limbs, attributes it to one Elizabeth Simpson, who she said tormented her in bed, "and did punch her heart and pull her in pieces;" whereupon the father drew blood from the accused, and his daughter obtained quiet, but not the use of her limbs.† Stranger (Nov. 10, 1663) "tormented Jane Milburne's body soe intollerably that she could nott rest all the night, and was like to teare her very heart in pieces." ‡ May 17, 1673, Dorothy Himers of Morpeth accuses Margaret Milburne, of causing her to take fits in which she apprehended she saw the said Margaret; and in one of these she "did apprehend that she did see the said Margaret Milbourne, widdow, standing on an oatescepp att her bed feet, thinkeing she was pulling her

* *Ibid.*, p. 75. † *Ibid.*, p 82. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

heart with something like a threed."* In one instance, at Newcastle, Aug. 8, 1661, the pain at the heart is by the use of a certain ointment, employed to ease a headache, transferred to the witch herself. The witch appears in the night-time at the bedside, and asks him to "wype off that on thy forehead, for it burns me to death." He asked her what it was that burnt her; she answered "that ointment that is on thy brow," and puft and blew and cryed, "Oh, burnt to the heart."†

Oct. 10, 1661, Mary Watson, witch and medicíner, transfers a disease to a dog within the house, which "presently dyed."‡

Aug. 18, 1664, at Newcastle, the complainant, Alice Thompson, continually cried out "of one Katherine Currey, alias Potts, that wrongs her, saying, 'Doe you not see her? doe you not see her, where the witch theafe stands?' And she doth continually cry out that she pulls her heart; she pricks her heart, and is in the roome to carry her away." §

Cases of vomiting pins, or being pricked with them, occur. July 12, 1656, Elizabeth Mallory, daughter of the Lady Mallory, of Studley Hall, who afterwards became wife of Sir Cuthbert Heron, of Chipchase, Bart., and at his decease remarried Ralph Jenison, of Elswick, Esq., aged 14, accused William and Mary Wade as the cause of her long sickness and fits, declaring she would never recover till the woman had confessed she had done her wrong, or was carried before a justice and punished. This young lady made people believe that she "vomited severall strange things, as blottinge paper full of pins and thred tied about, and likewise a lumpe of towe with pins and thred tied about it, and a peice of wooll and pins in it, and likewise two feathers and a sticke." In another fit she saw two cats, "one blacke and one yellow catte." When they were

* *Ibid.*, p. 202.
† *Ibid.*, p. 89.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 93.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

committed to prison she was freed of her fits. Wade himself rightly divined what was the matter with her, viz. she was "possessed with an evill spirit,"* not unlike that which animated Christian Shaw of Bargarran House, who caused the death of seven poor persons by similar accusations. The date, however, is later, 1697.† April 1, 1670, it was shown that on the previous day Mary Earneley of Alne, Yorkshire, fell into a very sick fit, in which she continued a long time, "sometimes cryinge out that Wilkinson wyfe prickt her with pins, clappinge her hand upon her thighs, intimatinge that shee pricked her thighes;" and she also ran a spit into her. The old woman, Ann Wilkinson, was also accused of bewitching to their death two sisters of Mary Earneley's, out of the mouth of one of them there being taken, a little before her death, "a black ribbond with a crooked pinne at the end of it." She also cursed people, and prevented butter coming when there was a churning. She was acquitted.‡ In another Yorkshire case, Aug. 6, 1674, "Timothy Hague of Denby, saith, that he was present when Mary Moore did vomitt a peice of bended wyer and a peice of paper with two crooked pins in it, and hath att severall other tymes seene her vomitt crooked pinns."§

An accusation of the latest stamp occurs Dec. 11, 1680, before Sir Thomas Loraine, wherein Nicolas Rames informs that Elizabeth Fenwicke, of Longwitton, "being a woman of bad fame for witchcraff severall yeares hearetofore," had threatened to avenge herself for some ill turn he had done her. This she does by tormenting his sick wife, by riding upon her, and endeavouring to pull her out of the bed on to the floor. More-

* *Ibid.*, pp. 75-78.

† Mitchell and Dickie's *Philosophy of Witchcraft*, pp. 33-116.

‡ *Depositions, &c.*, pp. 176-7.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

over, in presence of the wife, a black man, thought to be the devil, "by the said Elizabeth Fenwicke danc togeather." Rames goes to the accused to ask her to visit his wife; and when she came his wife proposed to Fenwicke that she must have blood of her for bewitching her. "The saide Elizabeth answesheard again that if her blood would doe her any good she might have had it long since, and the saide Elizabeth would ha cutt her finger, and the sayde Anne Rames answeared againe, 'I will have it uppon the brow whear other people give it uppon witches;' and the sayde Elizabeth answeareth againe that if her chyldren should get notice of the saide blooding they would goe madde." But she consented to the operation, and the husband appears to have thrice run a great pin into her brow, before she would bleed, "and she, the sayde Elizabeth, desired him nott to discloase it, and he declared that if no further prejudice was to him or his wife he would not prosecute her." She was acquitted.*

The most interesting Northumbrian trial of all, that of Anne Baites and others, April 2, 1673, apparently modelled on some of the Scots cases of that period, would require to be given entire, being, as Mr. Raine remarks, "one of the most extraordinary that has ever been printed."†

Witchcraft.

I did not find many fresh illustrations of the belief in witchcraft in those portions of Northumberland where I endeavoured to hunt them up.

The last witch in the north was said to have been burnt at Eglingham, a village mid-way between Wooler and Alnwick. I have only tradition for this statement.

A woman was "scored above the breath" for a witch, some

* *Ibid.*, p. 247. † *Ibid.*, pp. 191-201.

seventy or eighty years ago, at St. Ninian's fair, which is held on the 27th of September in a stubble field near Fenton, on the River Till, not far from Floddenfield. One attacked and scored the other for seducing her husband, making a bloody cross on her brow with a pin.

A little girl at Wooler said one day, "I met ——, whom folks call a witch. But I crookit my thumb at her." Mr. J. G. Fenwick says that in Weardale, in passing a witch, doubling the thumbs under the forefingers was considered a preventive to being bewitched. *

Those who have the eyebrows met are witches and warlocks.

Red butterflies are killed, being accounted witches.

An old man told me that his aunt used to keep a piece of bour tree, or elder, constantly in her kist (chest) to prevent her clothes from malign influence.

A stone with a natural hole in it was suspended from the bed-post to prevent sweating at night. It was called a "self-bore."

A similar stone hung on a nail on which the key is placed is called a witch's stone.

Moreover, a stone with a hole in it tied to the tester of the bed prevents nightmare from man and beast.†

A friend writes from near Newcastle in 1845: "Stones with holes in them I have frequently seen hung up behind the doors of dwelling-houses to keep out evil spirits."

Witch stones, so far as I have examined them, consist of old whorl-stones, of loom-weights, of any holed stone picked up in

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* *Folklore Record*, ii. p. 205.

† See Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, p. 147. To prevent the hag riding horses at night, it may be either a flint with a hole in it hung by the manger, or a flint without a hole will do if suspended from their necks.

the fields; and even of the upper stone of querns or hand-mills.

Cows and cows' milk are particularly susceptible of being hurt or perverted by witches.

All the cows' milk of a place in Northumberland was once bewitched, the milk having become so glutinous that it could be drawn out in strings. To remedy this the cows were milked in a south-running stream.*

When cows eat nettles, or have their udders bitten by pismires, they give bloody or lappered or stringy milk, and then are said to be bewitched. Also when the kirn is witched, and butter will not come, it is discovered that if a stronger person than the owner, whose strength is failing, does the churning, there is nothing wrong with the product.

Witched cows recover if sold.

When a cow calved it was customary to strew salt all along its back to keep the witch from hurting it.

If a stranger going past a woman milking a cow doesn't say, "Good luck to her," *i.e.* the cow, some misfortune will befall her. In the parish of Gargunnock, Stirlingshire, if a cow is suddenly taken ill it is ascribed to some extraordinary cause. If a person, when called to see one, does not say, "I wish her luck," there would be a suspicion he had some bad design.†

A farmer in Northumberland at one time lost a number of his cattle by a strange malady. Becoming suspicious that they were bewitched by a certain malevolent neighour, he had recourse to a "Skeely man," who advised him to take the

* "Est quando lac etiam cruentum excernitur: quo animadverso, mulierculæ lac omne emulsum aquæ fluenti infundunt; aleæ mulctrali inverso id est fundo emulgeat, et signo crucis notant. Hæc scribo ut aniles superstitiones istæ proditæ improbuntur."—*Con. Gesneri Historia Animalium*, vol i. pp. 58, 59.

† Sinclair's *Stat. Acct. of Scotland*, xviii. p. 123.

heart of one of the dead cattle and burn it, after having stuck it full of pins. While this was doing he was to take the precaution of having the doors and windows kept close. The rite was scarcely half completed, when the person suspected came "reeling" at the doors and windows for admission, "as if she would pull the house down." If the witch arrives before the heart is consumed, the operation is rendered inefficacious. A sheep's heart stuck full of pins and similarly treated was efficacious for a bewitched cow. These are from both the north and south of the county.

"In the parish of Sowerby, near Halifax, Yorkshire," writes Mr. John Carr, of Bondgate Hall, Alnwick, in 1824, "where the writer happened to be at the time, the cow of a poor cottager was taken ill soon after calving, and in the family distress at the prospect of losing its chief support, a *cunning man* was consulted, who declared that the cow was bewitched and the true calf carried off, and replaced by the witch herself in the shape of the calf then with the cow, and that by surrounding the disguised witch with a circle of fire, and slowly roasting her until quite consumed, the cow would recover and the true calf be restored. The horrible sacrifice was actually performed in the midst of the assembled villagers, and the terrific bellowings that issued from the burning sufferer were deemed certain evidence of the witch's presence and inability to escape, and were replied to by triumphant shouts at the success of the infamous proceeding. The cow died, and the vile impostor saved his conjuring reputation by impudently alleging that they had not, as he had urgently directed, conducted the previous preparations with sufficient secrecy, whereby the witch discovered what they were about, and again changed places with the calf before the burning." *

Newcastle Magazine, 1824, p. 4.

A female on the harvest ridge, once having the misfortune to break her sickle, was obliged to proceed home for another. As she went hastening along a hare hirpled across the path before her, and then turned round to gaze. She hurled her broken sickle at the hare, and it sprang suddenly across the field, as if a pack of harriers were on its trail. At her return, near the same spot, she encountered the hare, in the same attitude as before, and, determined not to be beat this time, she launched the fresh sickle at it and struck it on the brow. But instead of flying the hare with a wild scream of vengeance darted at her, and began biting and scratching her on the face like an enraged cat. A fight, attended with loud outcries, then commenced betwixt the two, which two labourers mowing in the vicinity overhearing hastened to the woman's rescue, else there is no saying what might have happened. On attempting to lay hold of the hare it slipped through their hands and escaped. Not long after that a very old woman in that quarter had, in some unknown manner and by a sharp instrument, an ugly gash made athwart her brow. This venerable dame had hitherto been very intimate with the individual who fought with the hare, but from that time forward could not abide her, and diligently avoided her presence. She now fell under the imputation of being a witch, for though looked upon askance and with dread, she had hitherto preserved external propriety. Losing this, she came forth in her true colours, renounced the friendship of her former associates, wreaked her fury on milk, butter-churns, and dwining babies, fell foul of the farmer's stock and shook his corn—in short, committed all the untoward disasters within her neighbours' limited geographical range. What befell her I was not told.

The most powerful efficient in averting the influence of magic and in revoking the spells of witches was *witchwood*, the mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), called in divers parts of Northumberland the Whicken tree and Rowan tree. Under

these standard terms it is mentioned by Turner, the father of English botany, in his *Herbal*, part ii. fol. 143, Cologne, 1562. "The tre groweth in moyste woodes, and it is called in Northumberlande a rowne tre, or a whicken tre; in the south partes of England a quick beam tre." Ihre derives the word rowan from *runa*, incantation, because of the use made of the wood in magical arts. As an infallible antidote to avert supernatural influences of a malignant nature, it has long been celebrated. Nations bore attestation to its sovereign qualities, and assigned to it functions the most select. Rudbeck mentions its sacred character among the northern Gothic tribes. They inscribed their laws upon its wood, an honour which it shared with the beech. Bishop Heber noticed a parallel superstition in Hindustan connected with a species of mimosa, which at a little distance wears considerably the aspect of the mountain ash: "A sprig worn in the turban, or suspended over the bed, was a perfect security against all spells, evil-eye, &c., insomuch that the most formidable wizard would not, if he could help it, approach its shade" (Heber's *Journal*). In the days of yore, when fairies footed it on every emerald hillock, and witches cast their cantrips with unlimited might—when such a debasing state of ideal fear prevailed that "the sound of a shaken leaf" inspired images of dread—rowan-tree was of paramount importance in Northumberland and elsewhere. Almost every mansion and outhouse was guarded with it in some shape, for it would have been heresy to doubt the adage—

"Rowan tree and red thread
Haud the witches a' in dread." *

* There is a Roxburghshire saying to this effect:

"Hagberry, hagberry, hang the deil,
Rowan-tree, rowan-tree, help it weel."

The hag-berry is the bird-cherry (*Prunus padus*).

Usually the dwelling-house was secured with a rowan-tree pin, that the evil thing might not cross the threshold. In addition to the bit in his pocket, the ploughman yoked his oxen to a rowan-tree bow, and with a whip attached to a rowan-tree shaft, drove the incorrigible steer along the ridge. Moreover, the ox not unlikely had his horns decorated with red thread, amidst which pieces of rowan-tree were inserted, or a portion of the wood carved with quaint devices and similarly garnished with threads would be dangling at the tail. Thus fenced in person, home, and stall, the agricultural labourer bade defiance to sorcery and fiendish malice. It used to be remembered that once when the axle-tree of a cart driven by a superstitious old man broke down, his more enlightened companions jeeringly asked at him where was his "rowan-tree pin the day?" In a case of supposed witchcraft in Yorkshire, Aug. 26, 1674, Thomas Bramhall was inexpugnable to magic art, "for they tie soe much whighen about him, I cannot come to my purpose, else I could have worn him away once in two yeares." * But it was equally requisite to a prosperous voyage on the deep, and sailors, to ensure no other hazards than those incidental to their profession, had over and above their cargo a store of this harm-expelling preservative on board.†

A deceased friend wrote to me several years since, saying: "Mr. John Holmes, of the Banks, in Cumberland, knows an old man who travels the country with besoms. He carries with him and gives to the women, his customers, pieces of rowan-tree, of an inch or so in length, with various cuts and notches on each, two of which, one on each end of the piece of wood, are in the form of a cross. These, he says, if carried in the pocket, will keep off evil spirits."

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* *Depositions, &c., from York Castle*, p. 209.

† J. H., in Richardson's *Local Hist. Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. p. 183.

I once met with a person who told me a pure version of the enchanted toad at Bamburgh Castle, the same story which Lambe converted into the ballad of the "Laidley Worm," in which the development of the plot mainly depends upon the potentiality of the rowan-tree over whitchcraft. I communicated the story to my friend Dr. Johnston, of Berwick, who has interwoven it with his own materials in a passage or two of his *Natural History of the Eastern Borders*, pp. 233, 234. I will give it nearly as it is found there. Once on a time—a long time ago—Bamburgh Castle was the residence of a witch stepmother, who, from hatred and jealousy, banished her lord's son beyond the seas, and changed his fair daughter into a toad; and this loathsome shape she was to endure until her brother could return and dissolve the enchantment. The fond brother very often made the attempt to return, but as often in vain, for the coast was guarded by a powerful spell, and every ship that strove to reach the shore was either driven off by invisible agents, or the nails drew off themselves from the beams, and the vessel went to pieces. At length he bethought himself of having a ship built entirely of rowan-tree wood, and the sails and the ropes bound with red thread. Immediately on the brother's embarkation the vessel bounded over the favouring sea, and in spite of the might and skill of the witches under the command of the step-dame, it sailed, as if self-moved, into the desired haven.* Lambe's version illustrates this more fully:

"They built a ship without delay,
With masts of the rown-tree;
With fluttering sails of silk so fine,
And set her on the sea.

* There was no "interposition of a fairy" in my draft of the story.

"The queen look'd out at her bower window
To see what she could see;
There she espied a gallant ship
Sailing upon the sea.

"When she beheld the silken sails
Full glancing in the sun,
To sink the ship she sent away
Her witch wives every one.

"The spells were vain; the hags returned
To the queen in sorrowful mood,
Crying that witches have no power,
Where there is rown-tree wood."

Aided by the Index, which, however, is not very correct, of the 1st vol. of Richardson's *Table Book*, a summary of the incidents of witchcraft in Northumberland and Durham may be compiled. 28th July, 1582, Allison Lawe of Hart, co. Durham, "a notorious sorcerer and enchanter," did penance once in the market-place at Durham, once in Hart Church, and once at Norton Church. Janet Bainbridge and Janet Allenson, of Stockton, were accused of "asking counsell at witches, and resorting to Allison Lawe for cure of the sicke" (Surtees). Two men and two women were committed to prison by Sir John Forster, on suspicion of having caused the death of Nicholas Ridley, of Willimoteswick, sheriff of Northumberland, who died 16th January, 1585-6 (Sharp). In 1649, the witch-finder, in consequence of a petition from the inhabitants of Newcastle, was invited there from Scotland by the magistrates. This impostor set aside twenty-seven out of the thirty suspected persons, and in consequence fourteen witches and one wizard belonging to Newcastle were executed on the town moor (Gardiner's *England's Grievance*). The following entry occurs in the register of the parochial chapelry of St. Andrew in Newcastle: "1650, 21st

August.—Thes partes her under named, wer executed in the town mor for wiches.—Isab' Brown, Margrit Maddeson, Ann Watson, Ellenor Henderson, Ellsabeth Dobson, Matthew Boner, Mrs. Ellsabeth Anderson, Jane Huntor, Jane Koupling, Margrit Brown, Margrit Moffit, Ellenor Robson for stellin of silver spownes, Kattren Wellsh for a wich, Aylles Hume, Marie Pootes." At the close occurs "Jane Martin, the millar's wif of Chattin, for a wich." In 1649 the following entry occurs in Gateshead parish books, whence it is copied into Sykes' *Local Records*: "Paid at M^ris^ Watson's when the justices sat to examine the witches, 3s. 4d.; for a grave for a witch, 6d.; for trying the witches, £1 5s."

The witch-finder afterwards went into Northumberland to try women there, where he got of some three pounds a piece to allow them to escape, for which being called in question he fled into Scotland, where it is satisfactory to know he was hanged (Brand). July 30, 1649, the magistrates of Berwick invited him to try witches within the town (Fuller).

In January, 1652, Francis Adamson and one named Powle were executed in the city of Durham for witchcraft (Surtees). At the assizes at Durham, July, 1668, Alice Armstrong, wife of Christopher Armstong, of Shotton, labourer, was tried for bewitching to death an oxe belonging to Barbara Thompson (Sykes).

In the Legendary Division of the *Table Book*, i. pp. 391, 396, Mr. Robert White narrates the adventures of one of the Delavals of Seaton Delaval with witches, whose place of convention for the performance of horrible rites was Wallsend Old Church.

"The Witches of Birtley" form the subject of a well-written sketch by James Telfer in his *Tales and Ballads* (London, 1852, pp. 241-261). I question, however, if there is any more truth in it than the declaration in the opening sentence that

"the village of Birtley, in North Tynedale, is spoken of by tradition as having been at one time a notable haunt of witches." Jane Frizzle, a notorious witch on the Northumbrian side of the Derwent, near Muggleswick, as we learn from a note to a poem in the Derwent, written by Dr. John Carr, who died in 1807, "practised on men, maidens, and cattle," but ere he had composed it "she had long breathed her last." The scene of Robert Davidson of Morebattle's poem, "The Witch's Cairn," was, I was told by the late Mr. George Tate, Newton Torr, on the River College, among the Cheviots. Its natural crown of rock, resembling a ruinous castle, certainly corresponds to "the old cairn on the edge of the fell," but the author in his notes does not exactly specify where it was situated. This little book, entitled *Leaves from a Peasant's Cottage Drawer*, was published in Edinburgh in 1848, pp. 230, 18mo. His notes make reference to cases of witch-burning at Beggar-Muir on the estate of Hartrigge, near Jedburgh, where the last victim is supposed to have perished in 1696.

Margaret Stothard, a poor old woman belonging to Edlingham, was, 22nd Jan., 1682-3, delated for witchcraft and charming before Henry Ogle, of Edlingham, Esq. The depositions elicited several popular beliefs in this department of necromancy. To John Mills, a yeoman at Edlingham Castle, while he was in his bed at night, came something in a blast of wind, which, pressing him over the heart, emitted cries like those of a cat; then a light shone at the bed-foot, and Margaret Stothard was visible in the light; with which visitation he was so greatly affrighted that he took a fit, during which it required several persons to hold him. Moreover, one night, when returning from paying his rent, he had occasion to ride past her door, when a flash of light crossed "over before him, and as he thought went to her dore," wherewith both him and his horse were terrorstruck; for "his hair stood upward on his head," and his

horse "took to a stand and would neither goe back nor forward," till he prayed to a higher power for deliverance. This same woman had charmed a sick or rather a bewitched child of one Jane Carr, of Lemenden, and cast the trouble upon a calf, which "went perfectly madd," and had to be slaughtered. A child of a woman belonging to Lorbottle, who had slighted this supposed witch in denying her alms, grew unwell the next morning, complaining that the woman was like to break her back, and press out her heart, and continued in this condition till she died next morning about cock-crow. "My Lady Widdrington," being informed of the circumstances, could form no other conclusion than that the child had been bewitched. But the more curious particulars are contained in the evidence of Isabel Maine, of Shawdon, spinster, who was the dairymaid of Jacob Pearson, of Titlington, gent. The milk of the cows having gone wrong would not produce cheese, and believing this to be occasioned by "some witch or other," she applied to Margaret Stothard, of Edlingham, as a "reputed charmer." Margaret promised to make all right again, and accomplished it within eight days. Although Miss Maine was a half believer in Margaret's powers, she was not disposed to make experiments on the subject; still she must have her curiosity satisfied. "Informant asked the said Margaret Stothard the reason why the milk came to be in that condition, she the said Margaret said that it was forespoken, and that some ill eyes had looked on it; and this Informant further asked her what was the reason that her master's cows swett soe when they stood in the byar; and then she bidd hir take salt and water and rubb upon their backs, and she further said to this Informant as touching the milk, allwayes when you goe to milke your cowes put a little salt in your pale or skeel; this Informant refusing to doe that, she would then give her a piece of Rowntree wood, and bid her take that alwayes along with hir when she went to the cowes."

She kept the piece of wood, but found no necessity for using it, as the quality of the milk was restored, and she could get "both butter and cheese of it." She then proposed to pay Margaret "for hir soe mending or charming of the said milk, and would have given hir a penny, and said it was charmer's dues, but she answered and said noe, a little of anything will serve me." Her master being informed of it, gave Margaret a fleece of wool, to which she added a little more, in a free-handed sort of way; the result being that after that "they had their milke in very good order." The last piece of advice received, she indignantly rejected. "The said Margaret Stothard said if you judge any person that hath wronged your milke, take your cowe-tye and aske the milke againe for God's sake (a common formula in such a case),* and she the said informant answered she would neer do that, if their milke should never be right any more." † It is probable that no further proceedings were taken.

In a calendar of prisoners confined in the Castle of Newcastle, to be tried at the assizes in 1628-9, occurs the name of "Jane Robson, wife of Matthew Robson of Leeplish," in Tynedale, committed by "Cuthbert Ridley, clerk, 19° July, 1628," and charged "with the felonious killing of Mabell Robson, the wife of George Robson, of Leeplish aforesaid, his brother-in-law," by sorcery or witchcraft.‡

In 1711 William Grey was a quack and warlock doctor at Littlehoughton, Northumberland. (Parish Register of Longhoughton.)

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* Milking the cow-tether, see Napier's *Folklore, &c.*, pp. 75, 170; Henderson's *Folklore*, pp. 199, 200; Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 329, ed. 1870; Kelly's *Indo-Europ. Trad. and Folklore*, p. 230.

† Mackenzie's *Hist. of Northumberland*, ii. pp. 33-36.

‡ Mickleton MSS. in *ibid.*, p. 36.

The belief in witchcraft died hard. Among the obituary notices in the *Newcastle Chronicle* for March 21, 1807, occurs the following: "At Hartburn, near Stockton, aged upwards of 90, a woman, who has for many years past, by the common people, been reputed *a witch*."

A proprietor of an estate near Wooler, a generation back, erected a shepherd's cottage in a most exposed situation near the summit of Hartsheugh, one of the lower Cheviot Hills. The wife of the last shepherd who tenanted it got credit for being a witch and a brewer of storms. The winds, however, overmatched her, for they not only dismantled the house, but "blew up the hearth-stone."

In a list of the inhabitants of Wooler about 1782, written by James Jackson from recollection in 1837, I find mention of "Jenny Hardy, a reputed witch," as living near Padge Pool Garden, about the north-west end of the town. The house and its neighbour, both very low-roofed and small, are now removed.

An anonymous writer, who dates from Alnwick, Feb. 14, 1770, gives a credible statement of the effects of being nurtured up in superstitious beliefs, such as were prevalent at that period, witchcraft being not the smallest to be dreaded. The writer had been initiated by his grandmother, until he became a "perfect adept in all the branches of superstition, from the trifling prognostics of coffee-grounds to the awful predictions of the planetary worlds." "A hare could not start or a magpie chatter in my walks which I did not interpret as prognosticating some calamity. A couple of straws lying across each other in my path were as terrible as a drawn sword in the hand of a murderous ruffian." "My case was by no means singular. I had several acquaintances equally wrapt up in superstitious absurdity. One would not pare his nails on a Friday because it

was unlucky; another would refrain from going on the most important journey if he met a person carrying water as he set out; and a third pretended to cure several distempers by burning horse-shoes in the chamber fire while he repeated certain magical prayers and incantations over the patient. A poor old superannuated woman was nearly bled to death by our thrusting a large pin into a vein in her temples, we having long suspected her for a witch, and the author of several little accidents which at that time befel us; many of us constantly wore charms and amulets for the prevention of witchcraft; and in short, we were devoted slaves to all the foolish freits which fable yet has feign'd or fear conceiv'd."*

Mr. Raine is of opinion that in none of the trial cases there was any conviction, and compliments the clear-headed jurymen of the North from their freedom from prejudice. At some of the Durham assizes the accused were perhaps not so fortunate. In 1649-50 witches cost the ratepayers of Gateshead much good money. "The poor suspected creatures had sad treatment at the hands of blind justice: arrested, examined, imprisoned, buried,—at the charge of the community."

	£	s.	d.
Going to the justices about the witches	0	4	0
Paid at Mrs. Watson's when the justices sat to examine the witches	0	3	4
Given to them in the Tolebouth, and carrying the witches to Durham	0	4	0
To constables, for carrying the witches to goul . .	0	4	0
Trying the witches	1	5	0
A grave for a witch	0	0	6

The departed witch of St. Mary's, buried at a charge of six-

* *The Literary Register or Weekly Miscellany*, vol. ii. pp. 43, 44. Newcastle, 1770.

pence for her grave, would be committed to the earth in a parish coffin.*

Notes of Possession in Books.

In a copy of Sir John Skene's *Regiam Majestatem*, Edinburgh, 1609, that had belonged in 1708 to Sir James Calder, of Muirtoune, who was created a baronet 5th November, 1686, I find the following:

"This book is mine if ye would know,
By leters nyne I will you show,
The first is J, a leter bright,
The next is Calder in all mens sight.
James Calder."

"Sir James Calder of Mourtone is the right owner of this book, 1708 years. Amen."

"Hear is a book, but small,
But doth in it contain."

* * * *

This book had also been the property of Robert Gordon, rector of Sutherland, 1617, also of George Lord Strathnaver, who died fifteenth Earl of Sutherland, 4th March, 1703. It contains another rhyme in an ancient hand.

"James Desenne God me defend,
And in my misrie God wits send,
I pray to God my hand to mend,
And bring my sowell to ane guid end.
ffinis quoth dan bobus."

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* Mr. James Clephane on Abigail and Timothy Tyzack, and Old Gateshead. *Arch. Æliana.*, n.s., viii. pp. 230, 231.

Some New Year's Observances.

To request a light on the morning of the New Year in North Northumberland is held by those retentive of old scruples as a very bad omen. At a farmhouse a careless servant, neglecting to cover up her fire on the Old Year's night, had to be obliged to her neighbours before it would kindle in the morning. Her master, apprised of the fatal omission, predicted some unforseen evil would be the consequence, and accordingly some time after two valuable cows that this girl milked were found one morning strangled at the stake. Several will not for any consideration even allow a *borrowed fire* to proceed from their dwellings. This heathenish belief is condemned about A.D. 746, in a letter from St. Boniface to Pope Zachary, whence it appears that "at Rome on New Year's day no one would suffer a neighbour to take fire out of her house, or anything of iron, or lend anything." (Hospinian apud Brand, *Pop. Ant.*, i. 9.) Nor was it lucky to sweep any dirt or ashes out of the house, nor throw out dirty water on New Year's day, but it was customary to gather everything inward, in order that plenty might bless the household for another season. All dirty clothes must be washed up before the New Year's advent. While careful thus of keeping one's property together, it was on the other hand unlucky to go out empty-handed, and to meet one with a bottle and glass in hand was fortunate. On that day to meet as first-foot a person with the eyebrows met was considered a bad encounter. To spill salt is at all times unlucky, but it is especially heinous on New Year's day. The coincidence of these with some of the observances at New Year's tide in the West of Scotland are worth remarking. Confer Napier's *Folklore*, p. 160.

The Rev. G. Rome Hall, F.S.A., in his article in the *Arch. Æliana*, n.s., viii. pp. 66, 67 (1879), on "Ancient Well Wor-

ship in North Tynedale," mentions several curious observances connected with wells in West Northumberland at New Year's tide, survivals of ancient paganism. At the ancient village of Wark there are three springs of water for the supply of the inhabitants. "On New Year's morning, within memory, each of these wells was visited by the villagers in the hope of their being the first to take what was called the 'Flower of the Well' [see Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 366 *et seq.*, who refers to this curious custom], that is, the first draught drunk by any one in the New Year. I have heard of one aged crone, who had the reputation of being uncanny, and concerned in forbidden devices of witchcraft, endeavouring to anticipate her rivals by going to the wells before 'the witching midnight hour,' so as to be in readiness for the advent of the incoming year. Whoever first drank of the spring would obtain, it was believed, marvellous powers throughout the next year, even to the extent, as my informant averred, of being able to pass through key-holes and take nocturnal flights in the air. And the fortunate recipient of such extraordinary powers notified his or her acquisition thereof by casting into the well an offering of flowers or grass, hay or straw, from seeing which the next earliest devotees would know that their labour was in vain when they, too late, came to the spring in the hope of possessing the flower of the well." At the Croft-foot Well at Birtley (formerly Birkley) the same custom was followed in the last generation. "There the villagers of a generation ago frequented the well in early hours of the New Year, like their neighbours at Wark; but they held that the fortunate first visitant of the well on New Year's morning who should fill his flask or bottle with the water would find that it retained its freshness and purity throughout the whole year, and also brought good luck to the house in which it remained."

Midsummer Bonfires.

The Rev. G. R. Hall, writing in 1879, says that "the fire festivals or bonfires of the summer solstice at the Old Midsummer until recently were commemorated on Christenburg Crags and elsewhere by leaping through and dancing round the fires, as those who have been present have told me." "The driving of cattle through the smoke of the need-fire, as a supposed preventative of murrain, and the carrying from farm to farm as quickly as men could ride the sacred self-lighted fire, made by two pieces of dry or rotted wood being rubbed together very quickly, has occurred at Birtley within the last thirty years; and this forms one of the most recent survivals of the adoration once so generally rendered to the great orb of day and to the element of fire."*

The Rev. J. E. Elliot Bates, rector of Whalton, in a paper on Whalton and its Vicinity, written for the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club (*Proc.*, vol. vi. pp. 242-3), narrates that "on Midsummer's eve, reckoned according to the old style, it was formerly the custom of the inhabitants, young and old, not only of Whalton but of most of the adjacent villages, to collect a large cartload of whins and other combustible materials, which was dragged by them with great rejoicing (a fiddler being seated on the top of the cart) into the village and erected into a pile. The people from the surrounding country assembled towards evening, when it was set on fire; and whilst the young danced around it, the elders looked on smoking their pipes and drinking their beer, until it was consumed. There can be little doubt that this curious old custom dates from a very remote antiquity." In his evidence in March, 1878, in the Whalton Green case, which was decided in favour of the right of user by the villagers,

* *Archaeologia Æliana*, n.s., viii. p. 73.

the rector of Whalton gave evidence as to the constant use of the part of the green in question since 1843. "The bonfire," he said, "was lighted a little to the north-east of the well at Whalton, and partly on the footpath, and people danced round it and jumped through it. That was never interrupted."*

Friday Unlucky.

The Messrs. Richardson, painters, Newcastle, were superstitious observers of lucky and unlucky days. They were invited on a Saturday to Day the artist's to inspect a particular process, but they had an engagement elsewhere. "Why not come on Friday then" asked Mr. Day, "when none of us are occupied?" The excuse was, "Me an' ma son dinna' like to begin any work on a Friday."

It is unlucky to enter into the occupancy of a house at term-time on a Friday; and Friday is not a good day to buy or make a bargain on. Sailors reckon Friday the worst day to sail on; Sunday is the best day for a fortunate voyage. An emigrant vessel that sailed on a Friday was wrecked.

In Northumberland it is unlucky to cut hair on a Friday, or pare the nails on a Sunday, for according to the rhyme:

> "Friday's hair and Sunday's horn,
> Ye'll meet the Black Man on Monanday morn."

See also Dyer's *English Folklore*, p. 237:

> "Friday cut and Sunday shorn,
> Better never have been born."

On the other hand, "an old hexameter at the end of the editions of Ausonius has: Ungues Mercurio, barbam Jove,

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* *Arch. Æliana, ubi sup.*

Cypride crinis (nails on Wednesday, beard on Thursday, hair on Friday)"*

In Westmoreland, "there are few country people will begin any important work on the Friday. If they commence hay-making or the corn harvest on that day, they believe it will have an unfortunate termination. It is an unlucky day, and it will not do to begin anything of consequence on that day."†

At Wooler it is the same: "Never begin any work," old people would tell you, "that ye canna finish that week."

Barring-out Day.

On this subject I received a communication which is dated Newcastle, May 18th, 1844, from Mr. Robert Bolam, who I was informed kept a school there.‡ I shall preserve it nearly in the form in which I obtained it, as it preserves some peculiarities in a teacher's life not likely to occur now; although among the Cheviots, not many years ago, I encountered young men who kept school and were boarded alternately for a month in the shepherds' houses who had children.

"Barring-out day" was the last school day in the year—the day in which all schools broke up for the Christmas holidays, and was looked forward to with great anxiety by the pupils in the county of Northumberland. A day on which they for one short hour were to have the mastery was worth all the rest of the year. On that day a small subscription was made; in general the boys contributed 3d. and the girls 2d. each,

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* Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. i. p. 123, English edition.

† Mr. Pearson on Superstitions of Westmoreland, &c., *London Saturday Journal*, vol. i. p. 130 (1841).

‡ Mr. Bolam contributed to Richardson's Table Book, Leg. Div., i. 96, 97, "Wild Adventures with the Dwarfs on Simonside Hills."

defaulters being as rare as they were odious. To this the master, though well aware of the coming mutiny, added a donation of sixpence or a shilling, and several neighbours too aided the fund. With this money a quantity of bread and strong beer was procured, wherewith the scholars regaled themselves until they became warm with the liquor, when the master was mobbed and turned out and the door locked on him. A parley then took place as to the number of days' play the children were to have, nor was the *dominie* admitted again until the terms were settled and he had consented to forgive them for their riotous conduct.

When it is understood that the quarter pence still run on during the vocation, it may naturally be asked why the master had so strong an objection to a lengthened recess? Though I do not profess to trace the custom back to its origin, I will hazard a conjecture that the social manner in which schoolmasters were in those times usually engaged was not without its influence on the conduct of both masters and pupils. It was customary for two or more of the wealthier inhabitants of a rural district to give the master his board and lodging, in weekly rotation, for the tuition of their children, allowing him to make what he could by the attendance of others in the vicinity. In many cases the pocket money accruing to the master was very scanty, and as he had to spend the holidays among his own friends and relations, a long vacation pressed sore upon his scanty finances, and furnished him with a sufficient motive for an early return to his free quarters, while on the other hand the children in their fondness for play cared not how long his stay was protracted.

[Mr. Bolam had forgotten that if the schoolmaster had abdicated too long, his manliness would have been called in question, and it would have been said of him that the children had the upperhand; moreover, if he was conscientious, there

was the waste of precious time, even though the days were then of the briefest.]

Mr. B. goes on to relate the only instance in which he ever saw "barring-out" put into practice:—On the 23rd December, 1808, the pupils of Mr. Edward Storey, at Throphill, assembled in the schoolroom during the dinner hour, and having elected one of the senior boys as speaker, locked themselves in. On the master arriving and peremptorily requiring admission, the youth behind the door resolutely requested a fortnight's play. After a little altercation, the master, perceiving himself likely to be made the object of ridicule by the neighbours, who began to assemble to see the fun, thought it most prudent to accede to the terms, but no sooner had he set his foot over the threshold than he broke his word by abridging the term to nine or ten days. In this instance the bread and beer were not brought in till the middle of the afternoon. In this school these customs were wholly done away with on the following season by Mr. Alexander Ross, Mr. Storey's successor.

[At Alnwick Grammar School, when Mr. Rumney was master, a famous barring-out occurred, which lasted for a week. It was headed by Percival Stockdale, who describes it in his *Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 88-92; see also Tate's *Hist. of Alnwick*, ii. pp. 90, 91, 96. At that place this anniversary was observed on St. Andrew's day. It is still practised in some rural schools, but the playtime is rarely more than a single day. The contributions levied by the scholars are spent on sweetmeats. In Scotland "the maister is steeket oot" on the "shortest day." In the school that I attended there was an annual "barring-out." The verses used were very puerile, although defiant:

"This is the shortest day,
An' we maun hae the play,
An' if ye wunna gies the play,
We'll steek ye oot a' the day."]

GUISARDING RHYMES.

Redd room, redd room, for Guisard's sport,
For to this house I must resort ;
Resort, resort, for merry play,
Call in Goliah, and he'll clear the way.

A room, a room, my gallant boys,
Give us room to rise.
Stir up the fire and give us light,
For in this house shall be a fight.
If you don't believe the word I say,
I'll call in Goliah, and he'll clear the way.

No. 2. Here comes I, Goliah, Goliah is my name,
With sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game.
No. 1. The game, sir, the game, sir, it's not within your power ;
I'll slash you to inches in less than half an hour.
Nos. 1 and 2 fight ; 2 falls, and 1 breaks out into a lament.
No. 1. Alas ! alas ! what's this I've done ?
I've ruin'd myself, and kill'd my only son ;
Round the kitchen, round the hall,
Is there not a Doctor to be found at all ?

One at the door says :

No. 3. Yes ! here am I, Johnny Brown,
The best Doctor in the town.
No. 1. How came you to be the best Doctor in the town ?
No. 3. By my travels.
No. 1. Where did you travel ?
No. 3. Hickerty, pickerty, France and Spain,
Then back to old England again.
No. 1. What can you cure ?
No. 3. Anything.
No. 1. Can you cure a dead man ?
No. 3. Yes, indeed, that I can.

[Holds a bottle to the slain champion, and says :
Rise up, Jack, and fight again.

The result being that he is resuscitated.

No. 4 enters. Here comes in old Row-rumple,
On my shoulder I carry a dumple,
In my hand a piece of fat.
Please can you pitch a copper into my old hat.

After this beggarly conclusion, and the singing of a song or two, the little actors, having obtained a donation, hasten off to the next dwelling.

Verses used in old Valentines in Northumberland and Berwickshire.

O heart of gold! thou love of mine,
I drew you for my Valentine;
I drew you out among the rest,
And took you for my very best.

The rose is red, the violet's blue,
The honey's sweet, love, so are you!
And so are they that sent you this,
And when we meet, we'll have a kiss.

Round is (or as) the ring that has no end,
So is my love to you, my friend;
My heart and hand are joined together,
Your love may change, but mine can never.

The ring is round, the bed is square,
You and I shall be a pair.

Some draw valentines by lot,
And some draw those that they love not;
But I draw you whom I love best,
And choose you from among the rest.

The ring is round, and hath no end,
And this I send to you, my friend;
And if you take it in good part,
I shall be glad with all my heart.

But if you do these lines refuse,
The paper burn, pray me excuse.
Excuse me now for being so bold,
I should have wrote your name in gold;
But gold was scarce, as you may think,
Which made me write your name with ink.

The above purports to be taken from a collection of last-century valentines, and was sent by Thomas Groom to Ann Jebb. "Ann Jebb, however, married, in 1788, a Mr. Nunnerly, and became grandmother of one of the six hundred of the Balaklava charge."

Kern-rhymes in Northumberland.

On the conclusion of the harvest, while carrying the corn-baby from the field, the reapers shout:

"A kern, a kern, a heigh-ho!
A kern, a kern, a heigh-ho!
For Mr. B.'s corn's a' well shorn,
And we'll hae a kern, a heigh-ho."

It is usually recited by the clearest-voiced individual in the company. The following specimen of it has often awakened the echoes on the green banks of the Wansbeck:

"Blessed be the day our Saviour was born;
For Master Lennox's corn's all well shorn,
And we will have a good supper to-night,
And a drinking of ale, and a kern! a kern! ahoa!"

Those who would not join in the call had their ears "cobbed," or roughly pulled and pinched. In Glendale an abbreviated version of the harvest rhyme is in use:

"The master's corn is ripe—and shorn,
We bless the day that he was born,
Shouting a kern! a kern! ahoa."

The Drowned Faa, a Wooler Tradition.

The Wooler Fairs were wont to be regularly frequented by numbers of the Yetholm gypsies. At one of these periodical gatherings a female "faa" stole a pair of shoes from a stall. There had been in those days an inefficient system of police, for the Wooler people (although some ascribed the hasty action to the country attenders, tradesmen, or others of the fair) broke out and drowned the culprit off-hand in the "Blue Mill" dam. One man, it used to be told with shuddering, set his foot on the struggling victim to hold her down in the water. When reflection succeeded this popular outburst, the dead body was dragged out and laid upon a high stone, still conspicuous on the wooded bank east of the town, above the present Wooler Mill, where the slime was washed from the inanimate form. The gypsies never forgot the cruel outrage, and vowed revenge on the town, although, owing to the watch kept on them, they were prevented from putting their threats into execution. Old people, all gone now, used to keep in memory their dread of this retaliation. The town also was believed to lie under a curse for the unexpiated offence against justice, and whenever a long continuance of snow, or thunder, or rain, or gloomy days prevailed, the superstitious would mutter to each other that the prophecy was being fulfilled, "that a race of bad weather will hang over Wooler, for the death of Jean Gordon, drowned in the mill-dam." Singular effect of isolation and consequent dependence on physical phenomena, that they feared no retribution worse than frowning skies, and imagined that they had spells of bad weather in which the rest of the district did not participate!—J. H., in *The Gypsies of Yetholm, &c.*, edited by Wm. Brockie, Kelso, 1884, pp. 138-9.

Denwick.

Denwick, a pretty village of sixteen cottages, was one of the

ancient villa of Alnwick barony. "At Michaelmas time Alnwick feasted and Denwick played; and on the Monday the youthful population of Alnwick went to enjoy the games; the distinction appears in the old popular rhyme:

"Alnwick feast and Denwick play,
Bonnie lasses had-away."

Had-away is an Alnwickism, meaning come away. Tate's *Hist. of Alnwick*, ii. p. 376.

Games.

All the ordinary games of football, handball, droppy-pocket-handkerchief, kittie-cat and buck-stick, or as it is called in Scotland, hornie holes, clubbing or brandy-ball, and through-the-needle-se, were played in the Pasture at Alnwick on Shrove-tide, Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, Christmas, and other holidays. Not far from Ferniherst Castle, a very large oak tree, one of the last remains of the great Forest of Jed, is called the capon-tree; and near to Brampton, by the roadside, stands [stood] the branchless trunk of a capon-tree, beneath whose shade, tradition says, a cold collation, of which *capons* were the principal dainties, was provided for the judges of assize when met there by the authorities of Carlisle.*

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* In Dr. Robert Chambers's *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 115, there is a ball-playing rhyme:

"Stottie ba', hinnie ba', and all to me,
How mony bairns am I to hae?
Ane to live, and ane to dee,
And ane to sit on the nurse's knee!"

Addressed to a handball by girls, who suppose that they will have many children as the times they succeed in catching it.

Keppin Well.

Glanton has a famous well with imaginary salubrious qualities. It was the common well of the villagers, and lies near the base of a slope of Glanton Hill beyond the present school-house, and the water issued from a pipe. I am told that it was once customary for parents to take their weakly children to it in summer to be strengthened by the application of its refreshing waters. They were wrapped up in blankets and placed under the spout. It was called the Keppin' or Keppie Well, owing to the water having to be caught or "kepped" in pails, or skeels, or jugs, with which the townspeople resorted to it in the morning to take their turn in carrying home the domestic supply for the day. It was a great resort for gossip, but had no connection with "kepping" in the sense of convention.

Callaly Castle Rhymes.

The old generation who dwelt round Callaly Castle, it has been ascertained of late years, had some *reason* for their *rhymes* and traditions of another structure than the castle that occupies the present low-lying site having occupied the area of the old British Camp on Callaly Castle Hill. In preparing for a meeting of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, on June 25th, 1890, Major A. H. Browne, the genial and kind-hearted owner, caused excavations to be made all over the platform occupied by the extensive settlement of the pre-historic race who had made it a stronghold. The operation is not yet completed, but this much has been revealed, that within the area of the ancient encampment there are the foundations of a medieval building of an oblong shape, constructed of ashlar stones laid with mortar, and that the occupants had strengthened the interior wall of the old camp with a facing of mortar-laid ashlar, of which two courses

at least are still preserved, having till lately been buried under rubbish, and that they had also strongly rebuilt the walls of the main gateway, and while quarrying for materials to execute these operations had deepened the ditches of the camp rings. It is just possible that this newly discovered edifice may have been the "Castrum de Kaloule vet'," the Castle of Old Callaly of the List of Fortalices, made in 1415, but which afterwards the owners may have removed to a more sheltered and better watered situation in the vale below. That there was in 1415 a "New Callaly" is apparent from "Old Callaly" being specified in the return of fortified places of defence on the Borders at that period.

The rhyme appears to have been popular, as it has become subject to numerous variations. I have before me materials for the history of these, which it may be of interest to preserve in a series.

(1) It first occurs in Bell's "*Northern Bards*," 1812, p. 199, with this comment:

"At Callaly, the seat of the Claverings, tradition reports that, while the workmen were engaged in erecting the castle upon a hill, a little distance from the present edifice, they were surprised every morning to find their former day's work destroyed, and the whole impeded by supernatural obstacles, which causing them to watch, they heard a voice saying:

'Callaly Castle stands on a height;
It's up in the day, and down at night;
Build it down on the Shepherd's Shaw,
There it will stand and never fa'.'

Upon which the building was transferred to the place mentioned, where it now stands."

(2) Taken down from tradition from an ancient Northumbrian in Gateshead:

"Callaly Castle stands on a height,
Up in the day, and down in the night;
Set it up on the Shepherd's Shaw,
There it will stand and never fa'."

J. Hardy, in Richardson's *Table Book*, Leg. Div., ii. p. 109 (1846); whence it was transferred to Mr. G. B. Richardson's *Guide to the Newcastle and Berwick Railway*, p. 12, and M. A. Denham's *Popular Rhymes, &c.*, 1858; *Monthly Chronicle*, 1889, pp. 378-9.

The first line, as I learned afterwards, varies to:

"Callaly Ha' stands up on a height."

(3) "Callaly Castle built on a height,
Up in the day and down in the night,
Builded down in the Shepherd's Shaw,
It shall stand for aye and never fa'."

George Tate, in *Hist. of Ber. Nat. Club.*, iv. p. 225 (1861); W. W. Tomlinson's *Guide to Northumberland*, p. 357 (1888).

(4) "Callaly Castle stands on a height,
Up i' the day an' doon i' the night;
If ye build it on the Shepherd's Shaw,
There it'll stand and never fa'."

D. D. Dixon's *Vale of Whittingham*, p. 32 (1887).

(5) "Callaly Ha's up on a heet,
Up i' the day, an' doon i' the neet,
If ye beeld it down yon Shanter Shaw,
There it'll stand, an' nivver fa'."

J., on the authority of his grandfather and grandmother, *Alnwick and County Gazette*, July 5, 1890.

(6) "Callaly Castle stands on the height,
Up by day and down by night,
Set it down by the Shepherd's haugh,
There it shall stand and never fa'."

Version at the castle, 1890.

Callaly Pot Boiling.

When the "Callaly pot is boiling" it indicates bad weather. A mist in a ferment rises straight up from the ravine between the Castle Hill and Lorbottle Moor, and clings to the top of the hill. This is a sure sign of rain, both as seen from Biddleston on the west and Shawdon on the east. The "Callaly pot" was boiled by the Clavering owners, who were a Catholic family, to provide a dinner for the poor people who on Sunday and holidays attended the services at the chapel attached to the mansion. The "Haggerstone kail pot," of similar import, has already been noticed. Both are things of the past, but the mist still towers up on Callaly Hill in damp weather, an unfailing barometer.

Hob Thrush's Mills.

Hob Thrush's Mill Nick is a deep fissure with deep pot-holes and waterfalls in Callaly Crags, near Callaly Castle, worn out in the sandstone by the continuous action of the flooded waters of a streamlet originating in the eastern quarter of Lorbottle Moor. The pot-holes in the rocky water-course are Robin Goodfellow's or Hob Thrush's Mills, wherein he grinds his visionary grain. The mills are set agoing by spates, which bring down stones that rattle in the pot-holes, like the grinding gear of a mill set in motion. Another haunt of this sprite, who was a sort of Brownie, was at Holy Island, in Hob Thrush Island (now St. Cuthbert Island), where St. Cuthbert frightened him, and got the whole island to himself, name inclusive. Hob is very susceptible of an affront, as we are informed by Mr. Henderson in his *Folklore of the Northern Counties*, see p. 264. He was fond of seaside caverns. The oldest mention of him is perhaps contained in the following quotation from Halliwell's

Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, i. p. 453. *Hob-Thrush*, a goblin or spirit generally coupled with Robin Goodfellow. See Cotgrave, in v. *Loup-garou*; Tarlton, p. 55. The millipes is called the Hob-thrush louse.

"If he be no *Hob-thrush*, nor no Robin Goodfellow, I could find with all my heart to sip up a sillybub with him."—*Two Lancashire Lovers*, 1640, p. 222.

There is a Hob's Flow near Oakenshaw Burn and Caplestone Edge, in the dreary swampy solitudes close on the Border line between England and Scotland.—J. H., in *Hist. Ber. Nat. Club*, vol. xiii. p. 52.

Rowhope Wedding. [In Kidland.]

A tradition of the "Rowhope Wedding" still lingers in the memories of several of the residents of the Vale of the Coquet. This wedding took place about the year 1840, when James Hornsby and Mary Telford were married at Alwinton Church. There was a race for the "Kail," when sixteen horsemen rode for the prize, Rowhope being seven miles from Alwinton Church, far among the Cheviots, at the very foot of the Windy Gyle. The number of guests invited to celebrate the wedding was so great that the little house at Rowhope was filled to the door, which gave rise to the local saying, whenever there was a throng anywhere, that it was "like the Rowhope weddin'—strampin' ither's taes, an' rivin' ither's claes."—D. D. Dixon's Tractate on *Old Wedding Customs in Upper Coquetdale and Alndale*, 1888, p. 8.

Elsdon.

An "Elsdon Feast," according to a native, is "Curlew Eggs and Heather Broth." Mr. W. W. Tomlinson, in his *Guide to*

Northumberland, p. 306, says the village is popularly called "Cold Elsdon." Whatever it may be in winter, it has a cheerful aspect in autumn, being outwardly surrounded by a background of hills, but there is a cleugh behind its famous "Moat," down which a wind from the moorlands must sweep with great force. One of its rectors, the Rev. Charles Dodgson, could not endure its winter temperature. "I lay in the parlour," he wrote, "between two beds, to keep me from being frozen to death, for, as we keep open house, the winds enter from every quarter, and are apt to creep into bed to one." The Hexham poet, George Chatt, thus be-littles this entertainment for visitors by quoting the country proverb:

> "An' heather broth an' curlew eggs,
> Ye'll get for supper there."

The people of Redesdale, of which this is the capital, are as kind-hearted and hospitable as a visitor can desire, and there is no lack of what the old Scotch people called "creature comforts." *Experto crede.*—J. H.

The Heather Chieftain.

Col. John Blenkinsopp Coulson, of Blenkinsopp Hall, was called the "Heather Chieftain," from having ridden to Morpeth at the head of the voters of South Tynedale, during the fiercely contested election of 1826, with a sprig of heather in his hat. He died in 1863.

Howick Hole. Lowick Weather Wisdom.

1. At Lowick, if the wind in summer is in "Howick Hole," the people expect thunder.

2. When Black-heddon Hill, one of the Kyloe range, looks

as if it had approached Lowick, and the seams and depression on its face become vivid, rain is certain.

3. A Norham Feast wind is very hurtful in September for shaking corn. The feast is about the equinox.

Whittingham Place Rhymes.

Eslington for bonnie lasses,
Callaly for craws;
Whittingham for white bread,
Thrunton for Faws.

These are places on the Alne.—Faws' = *Gypsies.*

Whittingham Fair.

Are you going to Whittingham Fair?
Parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme;
Remember me to one who lives there,
For once she was a true love of mine.

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt,
Parsley, &c.*
Without any seam or needle work,
For once, &c.*

Tell her to wash it in yonder well,
Parsley, &c.
Where never spring water or rain ever fell,
For once, &c.

Tell her to dry it on yonder thorn,
Parsley, &c.
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born,
For once, &c.

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* In the original these are given in full.

Now he has asked me questions three,
Parsley, &c.
I hope he will answer as many for me,
For once *he* was, &c.

Tell him to find me an acre of land,
Parsley, &c.
Betwixt the salt water and the sea-sand,
For once, &c.

Tell him to plough it with a ram's horn,
Parsley, &c.
And sow it all over with one pepper corn,
For once, &c.

Tell him to reap it with a sickle of leather,
Parsley, &c.
And bind it up with a peacock's feather,
For once, &c.

When he has done and finished his work,
Parsley, &c.
O tell him to come and he'll have his shirt,
For once, &c.

D. D. Dixon's Tractate on *The Vale of Whittingham*, Newcastle-upon Tyne, 1887..

"To Cuthbert, Car, and Collingwood, to Shaftoe and to Hall,
To every gallant generous heart that for King James did fall."

Apparently a Jacobite toast, preserved among Sir Walter Scott's Memoranda (Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, royal 8vo, p. 731), not correctly taken down. George Collingwood of of Eslington, a descendant of Sir Cuthbert Collingwood, Captain John Shaftoe, Robert Shaftoe of Bavington and his son, and John

Hall of Otterburn, were participators in the "rising" of 1715-6. I do not remember any Carrs or Cutherts.—J. H.

"Tinmouth was Tinmouth when Shiels* was nyen,
An' Tynemouth 'll be Tynemouth when Shields is gyen."
A Guide to Tynemouth, p. 42.

The Four Quarters of the Globe.

The cabin boy's "fower quarters o' the globe" were: "Roosha, Proosha, Memel, and Shiels."—*Ibid.*

It is said that the Northumbrian salutation is, "What 'll you hev?" and the Durham greeting, "What 'll you stand."

Jarrow (Co. Durham).

"There was once an awd wife at Jarra,
An' she had nowt better t' dee,
So she put her awd man in a barra,
An' who-o-rl'd him ower the quay."—*Ibid.*

Rimside Black Sow.

Rimside Black Sow is a large sandstone block on Rimside Hill, remarkably like the effigy of the animal it is supposed to represent.

Signs of the Weather.

At Hauxley, on the Northumbrian coast south from Warkworth, bad weather is portended when the white wall of Alnwick Park, which lies at a considerable distance northwards, is very distinct to the view. The sounds of the sea foretell bad weather a night or two before, and the blast comes out of the direction

* North Shields.

whence the noise arises, although when first heard the wind may not be in that quarter.

"Mar Fire," or "Sea Mare," is spoken of by the Hauxley fishermen. On some nights there is a "vast o' fire" of this sort before bad weather. There are also what are called by them "greasy spots," or smooth-looking spaces, dappling the brine all over.—M. H. Dand.

When the water breaks white between the land and Holy Island it is the sign of a blast from the east.—*Ibid.*

"From Mountain to Mile."

Spoken of two farm places near Glanton.

Debdon Dirt.

The coal at Debdon Colliery, which adjoins Rimside Moor, above Rothbury, was so inferior that it was stigmatised as "Debdon Dirt." It is now disused.

Scotland.

The lordship of Wark, in Tynedale, was held by the Kings of Scotland for a long period as a fief from the English Kings till Edward I. made the disrupture. There are still portions of the banks of the Tyne called Scotland, *e.g.* below Haydon Bridge, at Allerwash. On the north side of South Tyne England is pointed out, and Scotland on the south of the river, as still preserving the distinction.

The Highlands.

The Highlands at Wooler is often the name given to the Cheviot range.

Like the Cobbler in the West is the Carter in the East.

The Cobbler is one of the Arrochar Hills at the head of Loch Long, Argyleshire; Carter Fell is a prominent member of the Cheviot Hills, whence the rivers Reed and Jed arise.

Cutty Soams.

Cutty Soams was a coal-pit Bogle, a sort of Brownie, whose disposition was purely mischievous, but he condescended sometimes to do good in an indirect way. He would occasionally bounce upon and thrash soundly some unpopular overman or deputy viewer; but his special business and delight was to cut the traces or "soams" by which the poor little assistant putters (sometimes girls) used then to be yoked to the wooden trams underground. It was no uncommon thing in the morning, when the men went down to work, for them to find that Cutty Soams had been busy during the night, and that every pair of rope-traces in the colliery had been cut to pieces. By many he was supposed to be the ghost of one of the poor fellows who had been killed in the pit at one time or other, and who came to warn his old marrows * of some misfortune that was going to happen. At Callington Pit, which was more particularly haunted, suspicion fell upon one of the deputies named Nelson, and soon after two men, the under-viewer and the overman, were precipitated to the bottom of the pit, owing to this man Nelson cutting the rope by which they descended, all but one strand. As a climax to this horrible catastrophe, the pit fired a few days afterwards, and tradition has it that Nelson was killed by the damp. Cutty Soams Colliery, as it had come to be nicknamed, never worked another day.—*Monthly Chronicle*, 1887, pp. 269, 270.

* Fellows.

Shilbottle Blue Bonnet or Blue Cap.

Of another Goblin, altogether a more sensible and indeed an honest and hard working Bogle, a writer in the *Colliery Guardian* of May 23rd, 1863, wrote as follows :—

"The supernatural person in question was no other than a ghostly putter, and his name was Blue-cap. Sometimes the miners would perceive a light-blue flame flicker through the air and settle on a full coal-tub, which immediately moved towards the rolly-way as though impelled by the sturdiest sinews in the working. Industrious Blue-cap required, and rightly, to be paid for his services, which he moderately rated as those of an ordinary average putter, therefore once a fortnight Blue-cap's wages were left for him in a solitary corner of the mine. If they were a farthing below his due, the indignant Blue-cap would not pocket a stiver; if they were a farthing above his due, indignant Blue-cap left the surplus revenue where he found it."

At Shilbottle Colliery, near Alnwick, Blue-cap was better known as Blue Bonnet.—*Monthly Chronicle*, p. 244.

The following series has been kindly furnished by Captain R. G. Huggup, Gloster Hill, Warkworth, and consists both of Popular Sayings and Folklore.—J. H.

"You are like the Piper o' Hexham."

You are like the Piper o' Hexham; he had only three tunes. The first was "Lang unkenned"; the second, "Naebody kenned;" and the third, "He didna' ken hissel."

This is said to an unmusical person.

"Once more round Jarrow Slake, and then I'll be done."

This was used by a tailor while making a pair of breeches for a very stout gentleman.

"That is going round by Newcastle to get to Shields."

My father often used this saying to express disapproval of the method of doing some work. His ancestors having farmed in the neighbourhood of Bedlington for a long period, I think it is likely that he had picked it up in his early days from some one of his relations.

"No good ever came out of Howick Hole."

When a child I have often heard this proverb in Bamboroughshire. I think it refers to the S.E. gales which bring so much wet to this county.

[This is already entered, but in a different form.]

"It's all ower [all over] like Jack's weddin"

I do not know if this is local, but I never heard it beyond the county.

"Gannin' folks are aye gettin'."

Those who travel much are always picking something up. "A ganging fit," &c., is the Scots form.

"What has that to do with the price of coals?"

I have often heard this used in North Country ships during an argument on any subject. It means, "You are getting wide of the mark."

"You can make a kirk or a mill on't for me."

That is, I have given you my advice, and you won't take it, so it is indifferent to me what becomes of the project.

"He neither said 'buff' nor 'stye.'"

This means, "He had not a word to say," a very common expression. I can offer no suggestion as to its origin.

Only five years ago I had a cow that took milk-fever after calving. An elderly woman immediately asked if we had been careful to rub a pinch of salt along her back at the moment she calved.

I have seen a corpse laid out with a small plate of salt placed on the breast, and believe it to be usually done in Northumberland.

Seventy years or so ago it was a common practice among the Hauxley fishermen, when shipwrecks had been scarce, to shut up the cat in a cupboard.—M. H. Dand.

The peasant women believe that the "black and white puddings" made at a pig-killing will certainly burst while boiling if the cook does not, when putting each string of puddings into the pot, mentally dedicate it to some one who is not present. This has nothing to do with the subsequent disposal of the delicacy.

Our peasantry have, or had within my recollection, a curious superstition that if a pig was killed when the moon was waning, the flesh would not take the salt.

Dr. O. Schrader, in his *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryans*, speaks of something analogous to this as being of most remote antiquity.—R. G. Huggup.

Neat's Fire.

In another communication Mr. Huggup says that his uncle, James Huggup, now deceased, gave him an account of the custom of using Neat's Fire to cure the hoose in cattle, a disease occasioned by worms in the throat. It was used every year in the district on the clayey lands south of the mouth of the

Coquet, but long before his time. The farmers came to an arrangement as to the order in which they were to use it. The fire was kindled with some ceremony at a certain farm agreed upon, and the cattle were then shut up in the straw-barn, where the fire was kept up among them for some time; after which a lighted brand was carried on to the next farm, where preparations had been made for a similar proceeding. If it went out the virtue was gone, and that year would probably be looked forward to with dread of many deaths among the herd. When this clay land was undrained there would be much loss from worms in the throat in cattle, so that there is something to commend itself to a practical farmer in smoking the herd.

For the process of making "Neat's Fire," or "Need Fire," see Mr. Denham's entry, *ubi supra*, "Need Fire."

XXI.

PLANT LORE: A BIOGRAPHY OF BORDER WILD FLOWERS.

THE RIBWORT PLANTAIN— PLANTAGO LANCEOLATA, *L.*

Grateful to the traveller to leave the dusty pathway near a town, bared by public traffic of every green thing—for the same road stretching away through the less frequented country district; for those strips of verdure, that like the ever-freshened margin of a stream, line the wayside on either hand—so clean, so cooling and so grassy, while they lighten his movements over their elastic sod, cheer also the spirits, by the variety of their vegetative covering; for nowhere is there a richer assemblage of country graces, beautiful anywhere, but nowhere more luxuriant and better looking than there, the ground being kept continually fertilized, and but sparingly cropped by flock or herd. There the gaudy dandelion first confesses how irresistible is the penetrative influence of opening spring; there the demure daisy earliest unseals its rosy lips and laughs out in the sunshine; there the speedwell sparkles—brightest organization of heaven's azure; and there the buttercups speck like golden studs nature's emerald raiment.

> "Can Imagination boast,
> Amid his gay creation, hues like these?"

These spots are the favourite resort of the Ribwort Plaintain. Youngsters in search of flowers will likely refuse its black and apparently bloomless heads, a place among the almost indis-

criminate ingredients of the spring posy; and it is true that its napless sugar-loaf hat looks rather odd and unflowerlike beside the trimmer head-dresses of its more brilliant companions; yet it cannot be said that amidst them it

> "Like a purple beech among the greens
> Looks out of place;"

for during the period of flowering—they are pretty objects—its circles of pale slender filaments and nodding anthers streaming around a dark centre, like the radiance about a saintly head, and particularly when sensitive to the aerial currents, they look like its feelers agitated by the breeze. The spike arises droopingly, black, and tapering to the point; but erects itself as the bloom wears off, and becomes quite cylindrical, and the colour progressively changes to brown, as if not sufficiently imbued with dye to withstand the sunlight; this being the lighter shade of the interior surface of its fast expanding florets. There is some variety in the size and shape of the heads; in the broader or narrower foliage; and in the length and tint of its filaments and stamens. In moist mornings, the last, like those of grass, being easily detached, are sprinkled copiously over the shoes of such as tread the "dewy lawn." The heads sometimes become forked, or multiple; sometimes entirely converted into leaves, with a new race of stems and heads originating from the centre; or one leaf or more springs from the typically unclothed stalk. None of these are of modern discovery; the older botanists knew all that we know of them; and attempted their classification under names such as we might apply to them.

Although the schoolboy may not admit its claims as a flower, yet in his estimation compared with it, what are "roses, violets"—

> "But toys
> For the smaller sort of boys,
> Or for greener damsels meant?"

for from its heads he obtains the weapons of a warfare that mimics "manly" might. Two little heroes challenge each other, and go and select an equal number of the toughest stems of ribwort they can meet with. One then holds out his stem, at which his opponent with another aims a deadly blow to behead it. Whether successful or not, he must in turn submit a stem with a head on it to the risk of the next stroke; and thus by alternate attempts is the contest continued, until one of them lose all the heads of his flowers, in which case he also loses the fight. Both the game and the weapons are called *Kemps*. A *kemp*, as at present in use, is the struggle for the "land end" in the harvest field.

"'Twas on the left the harsher jar,
Of sickles spoke commencing war,
And anger mutter'd low;
The soldier saw with jealous glance,
The blacksmith's ridge too far advance,
And held that ridge a foe;
And bore away; that action soon
Like light'ning glanced along the boon,
Till all, from side to side, was life,
Resentment, bustle, rage and strife,
And foot to foot the *kempers* join."

STORY'S *Harvest*.

But "kemp," sayeth Verstegan,* is a word of "noble descent;" and in the olden time signified a champion, or knight skilled in feats of arms.

"But on did come the kyng of Spayne
With kempes many a one."

Ballad of King Estmere.

In Anglo-Saxon *cempa* is a soldier, *campian* to fight; the Danish

* *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, p. 233.

kempe is a giant; the Islandic *kæmper*, a warrior. The Cimbri struck terror into their enemies, not less by their fighting qualities than by the name which these had stamped on them, for they were *kempers*, "the bravest of the brave".* The proudest title of the Cid was "the Compeador;" our kemp or kemper in the Spanish idiom. "Compeador is a term hardly translatable into English, for our word 'champion,' to which it most readily answers, excites little of that proud triumphant feeling which thrills the Spanish bosom at the mention of the 'Compeador.'" Sir James Kempt at Waterloo, and Dr. Vanderkemp, the African missionary, each in their respective fields of honour, vindicated their ancient lineage and name.† The Swedes call *Plantago media* kampar, from their word *kampa*, to contend or struggle. *Plantago major* is sometimes also our "kemps," perhaps the "kemp-seed" of Jamieson. In some parts of Scotland "Soldiers" is the Ribwort's name. In the pit-villages around Newcastle, "Cock-fighters" is the term for the game; modified about Berwick to "Fightee-cocks." In Suffolk it is "Cocks" (Moor); "Fighting-cocks" in Northamptonshire, "many a time have I played at fighting-cocks with them" (C. W. Peach); "Fighting-cocks" in the east of England (Halliwell); "Hardheads," in Lancashire (Brockett).‡ It does not, however, appear to have been its celebrity in boyish diversions that has earned for it the title of "Herba martis," § for it fell under the warrior god's protection for another reason. For "Mizaldus and others, yea almost all astrology-physicians,

* Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, i. p. 373; and Ruddiman Sibbald's *Glossary*.

† "Kemp, the surname of a man, that is, in old English, soldier." Chamberlayne's *Magnæ Britanniæ Notitia*, p. 162.

‡ The English name has passed over into Ireland: it is "Cocks" in Armagh; "Cocks and Hens" in Waterford.

§ Phrysius in J. Bauhin's *Hist. Plantarum*, iii. p 505.

hold this to be an herb of Mars, because it cures the diseases of the head, which are under the houses of Mars." "Neither," continues Culpepper, "is there hardly a martial disease but it cures."

It was once a custom in Berwickshire to practise divination by means of kemps. Two spikes were taken in full bloom, and being bereft of every appearance of blow, they were wrapt in a dock-leaf and put below a stone. One of them represented the lad, the other the lass. They were examined next morning, and if both spikes appeared in blossom, then there was to be "aye love between them twae:" if none, the "course of true love" was not "to run smooth." The appeal, however, generally ended as the parties wished, for since it is the rule in the inflorescence of spikes that the florets blow in succession, the being laid beneath a stone would have little influence in retarding their expansion if ready for development. A similar superstition prevails in Northamptonshire: thus Clare in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, p. 49:—

"Now young girls whisper things of love,
And from the old dame's hearing move;
Oft making 'love-knots' in the shade,
Of blue-green oat or wheaten blade;
Or, trying simple charms and spells
Which rural superstition tells,
They pull the little blossom threads,
From out the knot-weeds button heads,
And put the husk with many a smile,
In their white bosoms for a while,—
Then if they guess aright, the swain
Their love's sweet fancies tries to gain;
'Tis said, that ere it lies an hour,
'Twill blossom with a second flower,
And from the bosom's handkerchief
Bloom as it near had lost a leaf."

From Miss Baker's *Northamptonshire Words and Phrases*, i. p. 374, it appears that "knot-weed" in that county is applied indifferently to the three species of knap-weed, *Centaurea cyanus*, *nigra*, and *scabiosa*; all of which agree with ribwort in having hard heads or "knaps," which is Gerard's expression for the compact spike of the ribwort. Following on the knap-weed we can trace the superstition back again to the Borders; for what is Robert Story, the Northumbrian bard's "Flower of Love," in *Guthrum the Dane*, but *Centaurea nigra*.* Bertha, the Danish maiden, and secretly though vainly attached to him, is the instructress in the English language of Aymund, a Danish prince, wounded and taken prisoner.

"This plant, of many branches on a stem
And each branch crested with a purple gem
Which, armed and plumed, like a warrior stands—
We call a 'thistle.' *This* the tenderest hands
May grasp, although its shape and colour strike
As being to the others not unlike.
It has no name I wot of; but, above
The rest, it should be styled 'The flower of love;'
For 'tis to it the wondrous spells belong,
Which thus some bard has worked into a song.

"Young Waddie, on a summer's eve,
The maid he long had wooed, addressed:
'See! I these flowers of bloom bereave,
And put them underneath my vest.
The first shall bear thy name, 'tis meet;
The other that of Edith Bain!
And won't the morning, love, be sweet,
That sees one relic bud again?'

* Story's *Poetical Works*, 336, 337.

" They parted—as young lovers part,
With many a *last* good night and kiss ;
And each went home, with lightened heart,
To dream a dream of love and bliss.
Yet *her* heart was not happy quite ;
She pondered on these flowerets twain ;
And oft the maiden said, that night,
O ! which of them will bud again ?

" Next morning to her cot he hied :
' Come, guess on which the bloom's begun ? '
' I nothing care,' she archly cried,
' So Edith Bain's be *not* the one.'
He caught her in his arms. ' We meet,
Life-wedded by this token plain !
And is not love, the morning sweet,
That sees the relic bud again ? '

" The Maiden, having sung her simple lay,
Two flowers selected ; cut the bloom away ;
Then bade me place them ' underneath my vest ; '
To represent the two I loved the best.
' I know,' she said, ' the favourite of the twain,
But have a doubt that *that* will bud again.' "

Nor are these the only mysterious properties of ribwort. It is introduced as a magical herb in a burlesque poem from the Bannatyne MSS., entitled " An interlude of the laying of ane Ghaist," the scene of which is in the vicinity of North Berwick. Thus runs the spell that bound him :—

" Litill gaist, I conjur the,
With lierie and larie,
Bayth fra God, and Sanct Marie,
First with ane fischis mouth,
An syne with ane sowis towth,
With ten pertaine tais,
And nyne knokis of windil strais,

With three heids of curle doddy.'
And bid the ghaist turn in a body
Then after this conjuratioun,
The litill gaist will fall in soun,
And thair efter down lye,
Cryand mercy piteously;
Then with your left heil sane,
And it will nevér cum againe,
As muckle as a mige amaist."

The "Curle Doddy" is the head of the ribwort. In Morayshire it is "Carl-Doddies"; * in Banff and Aberdeen, "Carl-Dods." It is "Curl-Doddies" in Forfarshire, as I am informed by John Nevay, who has introduced it into his "Hymn to the Skylark" (*Poems*, p. 258):

"From yonder field where sits thy mate
Among *Curl-Doddies*, clover red and white,
I saw thee rise, thy soul elate
With blest connubial love,
Blithe warbling up the ethereal dome,
Right o'er thy grassy home."

There are a plurality of plants claimants of the name. In Berwickshire and Roxburghshire the *Scabiosa succisa* and *Knautia arvensis* are "Curly-Doddies:" and likewise the rising crosier-headed fronds of the male fern (*Lastrea Filix-mas*); in Orkney natural clover bears the name; and Curly Kale in the south of Scotland. † "Dod" is the reedmace (*Typha latifolia*) in the

* Dr. Gordon's *Flora of Moray*, p 6.

† In the following passage from "Ane Brash of Wowing, by Clerk" (Sibbald's *Chron. of Scottish Poetry*, i. p. 370; Evergreen, ii. p. 19), it appears to be a synonym for clover:—

"Quod he, my claver, my curle dody
My hinny-sopps, my sweit possody,
Be not owre bowstrous to your billy."

north of England. "Curly" is obvious enough; but "Carl" may have the masculine import which it had in the old language, and which still remains in such terms as Carl-cat, Carl-crab, Carl-hemp, Carl-tangle. The Irish Caoirle, a club, a reed; diminutive, Caoirlin, also offers itself. Dr. Jamieson thinks "Doddie" signifies bald; and hence we have the "Angus doddies," cattle without horns. Then we have "Doddie," frizzled (*doideach*) in Gaelic; and also "Dolde" in German, the top of a tree or plant. But the likelihood is that it is the same term as that applied on the Borders to round-topped hills. Thus we have Ilderton Dodd in the Cheviots; Duddo (*Dodd*, and A.S. *hoe*, a height) in North Durham, and also in the parish of Stannington; Doddington and its Dodd Well, Dodd House near Wallington, Dodd End in Alston parish, Dodbank near Whitfield, and Doddheap on Reed Water in Northumberland; Belton Dodd and the Dodd Hill in the Lammermoors; the Dodd near Hawick, and the Dodburn in Kirkton parish, Roxburghshire, not forgetting the "high Dodhead," and its redoubtable occupant of the "Riding Times," "Jamie Telfer." The family name of Dodd and Dodds originated among the Border hills.* We have an old English word *dod* to lop as a tree, which might be metaphorically applied to *cowed* cattle, to knob-headed flowers, and smooth hills of the conical form. In this sense it is only the truncated pyramidal heights of South Africa that can correctly be said to be *dodded*.

In Fife the bairns make a plaything of the Curly Doddy, saying:

> "Curly Doddy, do my biddin'
> Soop my house and shool my midden". †

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* Brockie's *Family Names of the Folks of Shields*, p. 41.

† Chambers' *Popular Rhymes*, p. 43.

Those of Berwickshire form of the heads of *Scabiosa succisa* a horologe of a primitive sort. The head is twisted round a few times, and then left to recover its position. The number of circumvolutions is the true index to the time of day.

Moreover, this kind of plantain, like others of the genus, is

"Full of great virtues, and for medicine good."

As a healing herb it ranks with *P. major*, which as an application "to stop the bleeding of wounds and to consolidate their lips," is renowned in Berwickshire as the "Healin' Leaf," or "Healin' Blade." The Highlanders and Irish call the ribwort *Slan-lus*, *i.e.* healing-herb, and apply it bruised to fresh wounds.* The Irish reapers greatly vaunt its merits for sickle-hurts. It is thus Shenstone's

"Plantain ribb'd, that heals the reaper's wound."

In Ayrshire *P. major* is thus employed; in Galloway it is *P. lanceolata*. From its being a specific against poison, Shakespeare's "plantain leaf" appears to have been the greater plantain; but Dr. Drummond makes it the ribwort.

Rom "Your plantain leaf is excellent for that."
Ben. "For what, I pray thee?"
Rom. "For your broken shin."†

"When this and other herbs were in repute as *vulneraries*, the principles which should regulate the treatment of wounds were

* Another Gaelic name equivalent to the above is Lus-an-t-slanuehaidh.

† In Yorkshire, as I am informed, it is believed that the plantain leaf may be beneficially applied fresh to any hurt in the leg.

little understood. The supposed virtues of the herb, however, produced this good effect; it was firmly bound over the cut so that the raw edges came in contact, adhesion followed, and the wound healed nearly as well as though the plant had not been used. The real secret of the cure was the application of the lips of the wound to each other; but this was not understood, and the supposed vulnerary bore off the credit." * The application of plantain to check the flow of blood is mentioned by both Dioscorides and Pliny, and subsequent herborists only copy what they promulgated.

Dioscorides recommended his plaintain (arnoglossos) for hydrophobia; and in the last century we find the same thing reported of ribwort as a novelty: "Ribworth, or rib-grass, was given at Roscrea in Ireland in 1796 with success; a table-spoonful of the juice (the quantity given to a dog) every morning and evening for a week, and a poultice of the bruised rib-grass applied to the wound until it healed. This saved the life and cured *one* person out of *seven* who were bit by a mad terrier; all the others died although they had immediate recourse to sea-bathing." †

P. lanceolata was cultivated more frequently formerly than at present, combined with a grass crop. It affords an early bite, but is not much relished by stock. "On poorer and drier soils it is said to answer well for sheep, being much used on the hills in Wales, where its roots spread and occasion a degree of fertility in districts which would otherwise be little better than bare rock." "Botanists," continues the writer of *British Husbandry*, i. p. 512, "differ in their estimation of its qualities, for by some it is said to be injurious to cows, and by others it is asserted that the richness of the milk in the celebrated dairies of

* Drummond's *First Steps to Botany*, p. 246.

† Daniel's *Rural Sports*, i. p. 177.

the Alps is attributable to this grass and the common lady's mantle, or *Alchemilla vulgaris*. When sown along with clover* it is also said to prevent cattle from being hoven." However, the "Adelgras" or "Riz," esteemed the second best milk-producing Alpine plant, in the wild-hay of the Alps (*Meum mutellina* being the first) is a different species, *Plantago alpina*. It grows at 6,000 feet and upwards. † By experiment the composition of 100 parts of the ash of *Plantago lanceolata* collected on the Bradford clay, a calcareous loam, consisted of 2·37 silica, 7·08 phosphoric acid, 6·11 sulphuric acid, 14·40 carbonic acid, 19·10 lime, 3·51 magnesia, 0·90 peroxide of iron, 33·26 potash, 4·53 chloride of potassium, 8·80, chloride of sodium. ‡

The Icelanders, who call *P. lanceolata*, "Selegrese," use it for food. §

Ribwort is eagerly sought after for its pollen by the hive-bees, in some localities, about the 19th of July. The bees pull down the long filaments with their forelegs, pass the anthers between their mandibles, by which means the pollen is scattered upon the face and body, whence it is speedily transferred to the hinder legs. They wheel round the flower with wonderful celerity, and then hasten on. The pollen thus collected is of a pale yellow or whitish tint.

I once met with a small oblong gall on the stalks from which I obtained a small black weevil of a corresponding shape, *Mecinus semicylindricus*. This, I believe, is the first time its

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* *Cheshire Report*, p. 181.

† *Berlepsch on the Alps; or Sketches of Life and Nature in the Mountains*, p. 350.

‡ J. T. Way and G. H. Ogston in *Journal of Royal Agric. Soc.*, xi. p. 537.

§ Van Troil's *Letters on Iceland*, p. 108.

transformation has been noted. The upper surface of the leaves of both this and *P. major* are mined by the maggots of a small two-winged fly, apparently, for they did not hatch with me, *Phytomyza nigricornis* of Macquart, the same species that is so abundant in the leaves of sow-thistles and Cinerarias. The larva of a small moth, *Gracilaria tringipennella* of Zeller, mines the upper surface of the leaves of the *P. lanceolata;* one brood begins to feed in October, changing to pupa in May; the other brood feeds up in June and July. * The caterpillars of three butterflies, *Melitæa Cinxia*, *M. Athalia* and *Steropes Paniscus* also feed on the leaves; and those of various other Lepidoptera select by preference this and other plantains. †

That distinguished scholar, the late Dr. Adams of Banchory (in the Appendix to Murray's *Northern Flora*), considered that *P. lanceolata* was one of the species of Arnoglossos mentioned by Dioscorides, *P. major* being the other; and of this opinion also was William Turner, the early English botanist; both doubtless following Macer. This Macer, not the Æmilius Macer quoted by Ovid, but it is said Odo, or Odobonus, a physician of later times in the guise of his name (‡), is the first to bring forward, in his leonine verses, the specific name *lanceolata*, which alludes to the lance-shaped form of the leaves :—

> "Altera vero minor, quam vulgo lanceolatam
> Dicunt, quod foliis, ut lancea, surgat acutis."

Lanceolata continued to be the officinal term, while *Lanceola* became the common one, and exists to the present day as the *Lanceole* of the French, and the Italian *Lancivola*. The lesser plantains, from the five ribs in the leaf, were called Pentaneuros

* Stainton's *Tineina*, p. 198.

† Stainton's *Manual of British Butterflies and Moths*.

‡ Pulteney's *Sketches*, i. p. 32.

or Quinquinervia, to distinguish them from *P. major*, which "propt by her seven nerves," was the Heptapleuros or Septinervia. It is doubtful whether the English name Rib-wort or Rib-grass is modelled on this. Coles, indeed, in the *Art of Simpling*, London, 1657, p. 30, says, "Plantane is called Rib-wort because every leafe hath five strings somewhat like ribs." In Somner's *Anglo-Saxon Lexicon* Ribbe is rendered Cynoglossus, which is an old *alias* of the plantain. William Turner, *Names of Herbes*, London, 1548, thus notices it: "Plantago is called in Greke Arnoglossus. There are two sorts of Plantaginis; the one is called in Englishe alone Plantain or waybread or great waybread. The other is called Rybwurte or Rybegrass, and of some Herbaries Lanceolata." In the second part of his *Herball*, he says it was called "in many places rybgrasse;" whence it appears that the name had been well established in his time. John Bauhin accounts for the name in saying that the Germans called it *Rosripp*, from the resemblance of the leaf to a horse-rib; and by a similar analogy the Dutch name is *Hontsribbe*, *i.e.* Dog-rib. In Donegal it is called *Rupple-grass*; *Ripple-grass* in Ettrick Forest and Galloway; and *Riplin-grass* in Lanarkshire; manifest corruptions of Rib grass. The Welsh have for it a superfluity of unpronounceable names. They call it *Llyriad Llwynhidydd*, *Llwyn y neidr*, *Traeturiad y bugeilydd*, *Ysgelynllys*, *Astyllenlys*, *Pennau'r gwyr*. The last may represent our "Curly-Doddy;" from *pennawr*, an ornament worn on the head, and *gwyr*, crooked, or it may be a contraction for *gwyran*, hay, reed, grass. They call it and *P. major*, *Sowdl Crist*, Christ's heel.

There are few spots in Great Britain where the ribwort does not prevail. Dr. Macgillivray noticed it on the shores of Harris*; it, as well as a small variety, is common in Shet-

* *Prize Essays and Trans. Highland Soc.*, vii. p. 104.

land.* Mr. H. C. Watson found it on the north coast of Caithness and Sutherland, and observed it at the height of five hundred yards in Forfarshire. † Its range in Yorkshire is up to seven hundred yards, ascending to near the peaks of the highest hills. ‡ It is widely diffused throughout Europe; Pallas found *Plantago media* and *P. lanceolata* on the peninsula of Kertsh, near Arabat, on the Sea of Azof. § A variety of it, *P. Azorica*, Hochst., grows in the Azores. ‖ It crosses the Atlantic, and is one of the plants in North America that descend to the sea-coast in the arctic zone. ¶ The European plantains, or species similar to them, occur also at Sitka, on the western coast of America, in 57° north latitude, where we find a vegetation corresponding with that of western Europe under the same parallels. **

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* Edmonston's *Flora*, p. 17.

† Murray's *Northern Flora*, p. 97.

‡ Baker's *North Yorkshire*, p. 271.

§ *Travels*, ii. p, 271.

‖ *Ray Society Reports and Papers on Botany*, 1849, p. 389.

¶ Meyen's *Geography of Plants*, p. 220.

** *Ibid.*, p. 203.

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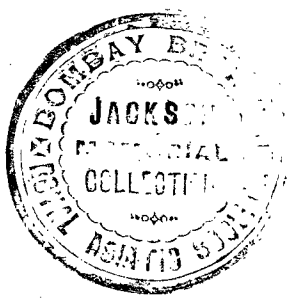

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